TELOS

UMBER 107 SPRING 1996

Beyond Modernism and Postmodernism: Populist Alternatives

Catherine Pickstock: Plato's Deconstruction of Derrida
Babette E. Babich: Physics vs. *Social Text*
Tim Luke: Re-Reading the Unabomber Manifesto
Aviezer Tucker: On Dissidence and Charter 77

On Immigration

Elías José Palti: Is There a *Telos* Right?
Russell A. Berman: Between Liberalism and Populism
Thomas Fleming: Proposition 187: Rejoinder to Palti
Paul Piccone: The Tribulations of Left Social Criticism

Evelyn Wilcock: Adorno, Jazz and Racism
Hans-Hermann Hoppe: The Case For Secession
David Ost, et al.: On Eastern Europe — A Symposium
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Krzysztof Michalski: Reply to Tucker
Aviezer Tucker: Rejoinder to Michalski
Paul Gottfried: From Fascism to the Managerial State

ice: US $11 Can.: $14

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Subscription Rates

One-year Individual . . . $35.00 One-year Institutional $90.00
Two-years Individual . . . $70.00 Two-years Institutional. . . .$180.00
(Foreign Subscribers, including Canadians, add 15%)

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Back Issues available: ns. 13, 17-18 20-51, 53-106 at $13.00 each ($30.00 fo
institutions). Foreign orders, add 15%. All payments must be in U.S. currency. Ou
of print issues (ns. 1-12, 14-16, 19, 52) can be obtained in microform or facsimil
through University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106, US.

Telos number 107 corresponds to Vol. 29, No. 1. ***Telos*** is published in the Spring
Summer, Fall, and Winter by Telos Press Ltd., 431 E. 12th Street, New York, NY
10009. Second Class postage paid at New York and additional mailing offices
Postmaster please send address changes to:

Telos
431 E. 12th Street
New York, NY 10009
© 1996, Telos Press Ltd. ISSN 0090-6514
Tel.: # 212-228-6479 Fax: # 212-228-6379
e-mail: telospress@aol.com

Unsolicited manuscripts will be considered only if the author provides at leas
three clean, finished copies conforming to the appropriate Telos style, or on IBM
compatible computer diskette. Allow at least three months for editorial evaluation
Manuscripts accepted for publication which undergo considerable editing will b
sent back to authors for final approval. Rejected manuscripts will be recycled.

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Introduction

If modernity is parasitic on established traditions, which it gradually erodes in the process of becoming generalized (thus undermining the preconditions for its eventual universalization), not only is the modernist project of "completing modernity" unfulfillable in principle, but its very possibility depends on the traditional dimension it allegedly seeks to displace. This is why most of today's major problems may not be due, as modernists claim, to what they demonize as the lingering influence of a perfidious pre-modernity, but rather the opposite: the debilitation of precisely those traditional residues beyond a certain critical point. Here modernity finds itself caught in a fatal dialectic. The more it deploys formal modernist devices as remedies, the more it erodes that organicity without which it cannot function and whose erosion requires additional and ever more counterproductive modernist intervention. The resulting multiplication of often contradictory rules and regulations triggers extreme antimodernist reactions culminating in the outright rejection of modernity in favor of some imagined golden age that never was. Thus, instead of focusing on ways of subsidizing a faltering modernity with the kind of solid traditional foundation it desperately needs, today's cultural battlefield is becoming saturated with confrontations between conflicting models of modernity requiring traditional foundations or between modernity and traditional alternatives in dire need of the instrumentalities of modernity.

This predicament is rapidly redefining post-Cold War politics beyond the Left-Right paradigm trapped within the the same bankrupt unilinear theory of history. Thus the most pressing issues today have little to do with more or less state intervention or how to integrate outsiders in homogenizing social structures, but rather with resisting the disintegration of whatever remains of the traditional dimension and the possibilities for its reconstitution. Populist projects are central to this resistance. While confused and vague, today's populism articulates a collective pre-political and pre-theoretical intuition of precisely this problematic. It is first and foremost an anti-modernist impulse in search of identity in those traditions intellectuals routinely demonize as superstition and irrationality — at least to the extent that modenism automatically rejects as irrational whatever cannot be captured by its identity logic. As an inextricable part of the Western tradition in general and American history in particular, populist sentiments take on

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various guises at different times. The posing of cultural and political questions beyond current squabbles between two equally abstract models of the same modernity (modernity vs. postmodernity), or of a simplistic contraposition of modernity vs. tradition, presupposes the preliminary task of retrieving these populist impulses by systematically reexamining recent history. These impulses turn out to be recurring *leimotifs* in Western history which, however, are systematically occluded in standard modernist accounts of an irresistible and infinite progress, whether through class-struggle, the expansion of freedom, or the universalization of market relations.

If modernity is not the arrival point of either Western civilization or universal history but, rather, an often destabilizing social pathology, its manifestations are not limited to the late stages of long historical trajectories and should be identifiable throughout. Adorno and Horkheimer sought to make precisely this argument in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, especially in the chapter where Odysseus, the spirit of capitalism and modernity, as in Goethe's *Faust*, ultimately finds peace and fulfillment only by restoring order back home after the long perilous journey. Hermes cannot do without Hestia. Yet, whenever modernity threatens to destroy the traditional order on the pretense of rationalizing it, the immediate response has been to seek either a "new and improved" modernity (postmodernity) as the solution or to displace it with an allegedly pristine, mythical tradition.

In this issue of *Telos*, Catherine Pickstock develops some of these themes in her rethinking of Socrates' response to sophism against Derrida's widely accepted and parroted account of Plato's dialogues. Through a close reading of these dialogues, she shows that Socrates' defense of the good as transcendent and unspeakable actually turns out to be a trenchant critique of the sophists' *modernist* efforts to challenge traditional society by restricting knowledge to the immediacy of the senses. Without any transcendental foundation, knowledge for the sophists degenerated into a matter of conflicting and irreconcilable opinions. Not only did they emphasize conventions and the primacy of contractual relations but, in order to mediate the resulting querrels, they needed an extensive set of laws and regulations, which tended to undermine traditional society.

Pickstock presents Socrates' attack on sophism as an attack on the root impulse of Western metaphysics, i.e., modernism, understood as the self-sufficiency of abstract concepts no longer grounded in a preconceptual transcendental dimension and thus radically cut off not only from "the divine" but also from locality, the body, particularity, and the importance of ritual and play. Derrida's Heideggerian interpretation, by taking Plato's forms as archetypes of presence, severs the forms from their traditional, preconceptual and liturgical dimension, and identifies not the sophists but Plato as the source of Western metaphysics, thereby perpetuating sophism — in its current postmodern embodiment — as the radical alternative. By emphasizing the primacy of the liturgical dimension as the path to reality, Pickstock can identify the sophists — and *ipso facto* the postmodernists

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— as the real dogmatic modernists caught in a destructive and nihilistic conventionalism of often contradictory and abstract concepts.

While fundamentally sound, Pickstock's account is not entirely free of problems. In criticizing Derrida, she accepts his collapse of Socrates' and Plato's positions, and ends up essentially reversing his account. Consequently, instead of relegating concepts and the various objectifications typical of modernity (the market, equal exchange, contractualism, science and technology) to an instrumental — although essential — role inextricably rooted in the transcendental dimension, she tends to dismiss them altogether. This may well have been Socrates' position, especially as it transpires in Plato's early journalistic dialogues where Socrates emphasizes pre-legal, familial and communal bonds. It is clear, however, that Socrates and Plato were not in complete agreement as to the proper critique of sophism and whether the founding but preconceptual traditionalism and transcendentalism could be safeguarded by the Socratic device of ironic questioning.

At the risk of projecting today's particular concerns back into fifth century Greek philosophy, Plato can be read as attempting to integrate sophism — and therefore the modernist dimension — within a broader transcendental framework able to withstand analysis and criticism without simultaneously having this framework deteriorate into arbitrary opinions. Such readings have been and continue to be dismissed by modernists as symptomatic of "premodern involutions" or "romantic reactions." Yet an adequate response to the recurring challenge of sophism requires precisely such a transcendental-traditional foundation for the mundane and the categorical, in order to demonstrate the untenability of the hidden modernist core of Derrida's skepticism. Such a critique would not just expose Derrida's postmodernism as part and parcel of the same modernity it allegedly rejects; it would also fit more readily with populist attempts to defend the primacy of the traditional and transcendental dimension as well as the cultural specificity resulting from the particular appropriation of the transcendental through *distinct* traditional frameworks, without thereby floundering in the nihilistic relativism of today's academic postmodernists.

Exactly the same issues resurface in Babette Babich's analysis of the Sokal hoax. Pitting those who argue that science is the only meaningful form of knowledge (and that the humanities consist of pretenders and incompetents) against humanists like Stanley Fish, who believe that consistency and coherence are indications of mediocrity (while scientists are intolerant dogmatists toadying up to state power in order to secure funding for their research), the debate has littered the pages of cultural journals in the last few months. The incident was basically the result of the incompetence and intellectual indolence of the *Social Text* editors, specifically their inability to decode Sokal's nonsensical "postmodern science" — an interesting failure for self-professed masters of advanced hemeneutics. Since most of the participants in the subsequent debate lacked any understanding of philosophy of science, the whole controversy quickly deteriorated to the level of a visit to the fun-house: a lot of people laughing at their own

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reflections. What is really at stake, however, is an internal struggle within the same modernism. As Babich shows, without realizing it both sides make the same assumptions about the nature of science and knowledge. In response, Babich outlines a Feyerabendian account which repositions science as one among many possible instrumental accounts of the natural world, but not in such a way that the world is reduced to the theoretical projects within which it is conceived — merely another social construct. Such a critique of science not only avoids the silliness of literary criticism but can readily become part of the vindication of the traditional and transcendental resistance to the predominant monolitic modernism.

On a more tragic note, the inability to formulate these issues within an adequate historical and theoretical context is also what led the Unabomber, an accomplished young mathematician trapped within an obtuse and self-conglatulatory scientistic culture, to the desperate launching of a destructive and utterly futile attack on innocent victims caught in the same cultural cobwebs. Equally tragic for American social consciousness has been its collective inability either to understand the phenomenon as symptomatic of a more widespread malaise or to draw any implications for a society stumbling into the 21st century without a clue as to how to deal with the fundamental problems of community, traditions and values. As Tim Luke points out in his re-reading of the already forgotten "Unabomber Manifesto," Kaczynski's indictment of industrial society was viable and presupposed a considerable theoretical background. In fact, even Kaczynski's retreat to Montana's backwoods is reminiscent of an earlier retreat to the Black Forest by a much more celebrated German intellectual with a similar diagnosis of modern society. Much like his German counterpart, Kaczynski's demonization of modernity as wholly *constitutive* rather than merely *instrumental* led to drastic and catastrophic choices — choices which ultimately reinforced rather than weakened modernist hegemony. Heidegger's desperate identification of Germany's redemption with the first proposal to "return to being" that came along, even if it meant the extermination of whole groups of people and the enslavement of most of humankind by an allegedly superior race, degenerated into existential arbitrariness and the axiological equivalence of all projects. Kaczynski's indiscriminate targeting of the system's alleged agents also lacked grounding in any concrete *traditional* framework. As in the case of Nazism, which ultimately helped legitimate an increasingly flaccid liberal-democracy for half a century after the end of WWII, the successful media dismissal of the Unabomber's message as that of another pathological outsider ended up providing negative reinforcement for the collective faith in technology and science as the snake-oil to cure all cultural ills.

The problem of personal salvation, either as the desperate transcendence of abstract individuality through often criminal and self-destructive existential voluntarism or as communal reconstitution (populist regrounding) reappears in Aviezer Tucker's reflections on East European dissidence. After tracing Karel Kosík's theoretical bankruptcy and moral irrelevance as a result of the inability of his once popular Heideggerian Marxism to develop a viable critique of modernity,

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Tucker discusses the dissident philosophy of Kosík's teacher, Jan Patocka, in terms of problems strikingly similar to those facing Plato and Socrates. In fact, the debate concerning the nature of dissidence pits Petr Rezek's vision of the philosopher as steadfastly searching for transcendence at the cost of forfeiting practically all concerns with immediacy and mundanity (Socrates' position) against Patocka's and Václav Havel's efforts to ground immanence in a regained transcendental dimension (Plato's position). In either case, at stake was not only a trenchant critique of modernity but possible alternatives to it. While populism remains altogether foreign to East European thought — a concept which, when broached at all, is still instinctively associated with Nazism and dismissed outright — the problems it addresses are part and parcel of current East European concerns. As the question of integration in the European Community and of the historically shifting borders of increasingly obsolete nation-states come under close scrutiny, however, populism, regionalism and localism will rise to the top of the East European political agenda.

Central in all of this is the concept of community — something still anachronistically associated by a tired modernism with the tight-knit villages idealized in medieval folklore. While this issue of *Telos* only touches on some of its essential characteristics, it does include a debate concerning immigration in general and California's Proposition 187 in particular. Clearly, the problem of mobility and immigration is central to any definition of community. While at first sight concerned with the usual injustices, inequality and even racism, Left-liberal arguments in favor of open borders (in their most extreme form) turn out to be predicated on an abstract cosmopolitanism contemptuous of all forms of community aspiring to cultural particularity and traditional identity. In addition to clarifying the extent to which, as Russell Berman shows, populism has an immensely more sophisticated analysis of the problem than does either the Left or liberalism, this discussion shows once again the irrelevance of the standard Left-Right political paradigm in making any sense of concrete problems.

The current political spectrum is all but clear on the question of localism, regionalism, etc. Thus, while defending, along with populists, the virtues of small political units and subsidiarity, libertarians tend to overemphasize the importance of economics and to be blissfully unaware of concepts such as community, history and tradition. In this issue, Hans-Hermann Hoppe challenges orthodox accounts concerning how statist centralization guarantees economic success and argues in favor of the economic advantages of secession and subsidiarity. In the process, however, he overgeneralizes and misrepresents a number of points. Even if now obsolete and arguably not the main agency of secularization or "the crowning achievement of occidental rationalism" Carl Schmitt thought it was, the modern state *did* come about, as Hobbes described it, primarily as an arrangement regulating "protection and obedience" in order to put an end to the devastating religious civil wars of the 16th and 17th centuries. Thus it is not just "a territorial

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monopoly of compulsion . . . in the form of taxation and regulation." It is also questionable whether at a time characterized by the widespread disintegration of relatively well-established nations, when the stature of the United Nations is at the lowest point since its founding, "mankind" is really "closer than ever before to the establishment of a world government." Equally problematic is the claim that "the smaller the country, the greater the pressure to opt for free trade rather than protectionism" — at least to the extent that today the US is the biggest defender and promoter of free trade while, e.g., Switzerland has been flirting with protectionism for years. At any rate, protectionism historically has been a tool of industrializing countries, large or small, for protecting the development of their nascent industries. Last, but not least, nowhere in Hoppe's account does culture seem to play any role. Small may very well be beautiful and efficient, but not necessarily because of exclusively economic imperatives. Maybe federal or confederal arrangements can safeguard autonomy and subsidiarity better than outright secession.

The same economistic bias pervades the symposium on "Eastern Europe and the Social Democratic Collapse." Still obsessed with the old Marxist dogma concerning the dependence of politics on economics, the participants never even mention culture, traditions and identity other than as indicators of potential right-wing involutions. Nor do they attempt to locate the problems of Eastern Europe within a broader geopolitical context which, in the long run, is decisive for the fate of that region. The symposium does, however, provide a general overview of the predicament of countries which, having successfully rejected communism, have yet to find a viable social model to integrate themselves within the liberal-capitalist world without unduly burdening an already overtaxed population.

Last, but not least, Evelyn Wilcock's analysis of Adorno's much maligned 1935 essay on jazz not only dispels many of the irresponsible charges of racism against Adorno by people unfamiliar with that particular essay by carefully reconstructing British debates about jazz at the time and by paying close attention to both geopolitical developments as well as Adorno's own biography, but indicates the extent to which it was itself a powerful indictment of whatever residual racism still permeated the British music industry. Far from constituting an early aberration in an extraordinary body of work on aesthetics, Adorno's essay on jazz is an integral part of it and prefigures many of the themes elaborated later.

Robert D'Amico, Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen

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Plato's Deconstruction of Derrida

Catherine Pickstock

In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates recognizes sophism's threat to civic life and warns against the nihilistic consequences of its severing of ontology from transcendence. In so doing, he attacks the earliest foreshadowing of contemporary secular modernity or postmodernity. In defense of the latter, Jacques Derrida has tried to show how Socrates' critique falters over the issues of speech and writing. Socrates' preference for the former, claims Derrida, is a defence of "metaphysical presence." Once this preference is deconstructed, his entire case collapses and an even more radical sophistry triumphs. Socrates' preference for speech over writing, however, is not a defense of "metaphysical presence" but the *opposite*: an *attack* on presence. His critique of writing and rhetoric does not entail a supralinguistic *logos*, independent of time and place. On the contrary, he associates this with the *sophist* vision of a purely commercial reality. As heir to this vision, Derrida's insistence on the transcendental *written character* of language turns out to be a rationalist attempt to suppress embodiment and temporality.

When all is said and done, Derrida turns out to be another rationalist metaphysician who cannot provide any genuine account of *différance*. Orality is not a mask for "presence," but is linked primarily to an account of the doxological subject. The *Phaedrus* and other Platonic dialogues provide considerable evidence that the measure of good ethical practice is as determined by an orientation to liturgical praise of the divine as by the ideal of rational contemplation. Contrary to Derrida, transcendence for Plato is not primarily upheld by an unambiguous "present" truth. Such a reading of the *Phaedrus* has implications for Derrida's "deconstruction of

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metaphysics" and its usefulness as a tool of political critique.[1]

In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates and his interlocutor take a walk outside the city, along the banks of the river Ilissus. Phaedrus leads his companion to a shady arbor where he reads aloud the script of a speech by Lysias advocating the contracting of erotic partnerships in order to avoid the difficulties usually associated with conventional relations. Socrates is then persuaded — against his will — to deliver a rival anti-erotic speech in which he opposes hedonistic pleasure to the good, and explains that these are paralleled by two conflicting principles in the soul: one, the natural desire, which aims at pleasure, and the other (*doxa*), which aims at what is best (237d-e). The "non-lover" of Socrates' speech makes no attempt to reconcile these two principles, arguing that pleasure tempts people toward what is not in their best interests. Thus, through the mask of the non-lover, Socrates evokes a "love" of domination which reduces the beloved to the status of an object. While designed to guard against the non-lover's personal suffering, such a stance inevitably causes the (objectified) beloved a great deal of suffering. Socrates then abruptly breaks off his speech in horror at his own attack on the higher *eros* and recants with a mythical hymn to Love, in which he claims that the philosophical life is rooted in the "divine" madness of *eros,* as opposed to purely "mortal" and parsimonious modes of self-control (256e). He enumerates examples of prophetic and religious madness, then further supports his contention both by means of a myth of the soul and of a theoretical description of philosophical love. In his myth, the immortal souls of both men and gods are likened to a winged chariot pulled by two horses and driven by a charioteer (246a). In divine souls, both horses are well-behaved, but in human souls one is good and the other lustful (246a-b). Socrates' objective in telling the myth is to reconcile erotic passion with the philosophical quest for the good. At the end of the speech, he describes exemplary philosophical lovers and the benefits to both lover and beloved reciprocally bestowed by the mediation of erotic beauty. He claims that both lovers gain something greater than can be gained either by human moderation or divine madness (256b).

Socrates goes on to develop a sustained critique of "sophistry" in all

1. Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in his *Dissemination*, tr. by Barbara Johnson (London: Athlone Press, 1981), pp. 63-171. All references to Plato's *Phaedrus* are to Harold North Fowler's translation (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), and they appear in parentheses in the text. For the historical context and chronological relation between the *Phaedrus* and Plato's other dialogues, see C. J. Rowe's edition of the *Phaedrus* (Warminster: Arris & Phillips Ltd., 1986), pp. 11-15.

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its guises, including the theory and practice of rhetoricians concerned neither with their interlocutor's soul nor with the pursuit of truth, and the practices of demythologizers and others concerned only with superficial matters rather than substantive content. He also provides a myth to illustrate the dangers of displacing speech by writing, as inimical to the philosophical exercise of memory of the good, and the practice of the dialectic. Thus, the critique of writing is closely related to an attack on the sophists — especially the implications for epistemology and ontology of the sophistic instrumentalization of language through manipulative rhetoric and denigration of the spoken word.[2]

Sophistry in the Marketplace

Derrida argues that Socrates' critique of writing in the *Phaedrus* implicitly advocates a metaphysical suppression of temporality, supplementarity, and difference in favor of self-presence, organlessness, and interior tranquillity which, for Derrida, are aligned with capital and the king, to the exclusion of all forms of illegitimacy or secondariness. However, it is precisely a sophistic suppression of genuine difference in favor of commercial and manipulative interests — through the instrumentalization of language — which Socrates criticizes for being inimical to the practice of dialectical differentiation. Both rhetoric and writing can be characterized by their assimilability to any cause and usefulness in any situation: a kind of saturation of difference which, as Socrates implies, reduces to the closure of difference or sheer indifference. It is therefore sophistry — not Socrates — which is associated with capital and a suppression of difference.

This association is part of a subtly drawn dualism, which plays on the ease with which the components of one category may be mistaken for those of the other, underlining the parodic relation between sophistry and true dialectic. For example, when Phaedrus — a character associated with the wavering allegiances of the market — selects the leafy arbor along the banks of the Ilissus and draws his interlocutor's attention to its *pneuma metrion* and soft grass, and speculates on the place's mythical resonances, his apparent appreciation of specific spatial and mythical differentiations is essentially a recognition of trading opportunities. His intention is to solicit the most possible speech from Socrates, and when subtle manipulations fail, Phaedrus is willing to opt for explicit bribery and threats of violence (e.g. 237a). Thus his commercial interest instrumentalizes companionship

2. See Deborah Tarn Steiner, *The Tyrant's Writ: Myths and Images of Writing in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 212-216.

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and linguistic interchange alike. His enthusiasm for Lysias' speech has nothing to do with the fact that what he said was worth saying, but that one could not have said *more* on the topic (234e-235b). The same enthusiasm is instantly transferred to Socrates, when he promises to deliver a speech containing not better but *more* points than Lysias (235d-236b).[3]

Thus sophistic consciousness is positioned in relation to the object as capital, of which it sees nothing but infinite variations of an equivalent measure. Such instrumentalized "seeing" is presented as a parodic version of the philosophical gaze, which is compared with that of the possessed poet who sees the events of the past as though he were present at their inception, and that of the lover who, on seeing his beloved, recognizes in his beauty a flicker of the good. While the sophistic assessment is fastened to oscillations of value and opinion, and remains entirely alien to its object, the philosophical gaze, in its exercise of *Mneme* (recollection), is a penetrative, essential recognition which links the seer to the seen without abolishing the distance of the "object" from the subject. In this way, the Socratic "object" acquires a transcendent quality before which the philosopher abases himself.

Writing as Capital

Given this explicit association of sophistry with market values, it is curious that Derrida should associate Socratic orality with *capital* and a metaphysics of presence. Derrida emphasizes Socrates' use of the metaphor of *tokos* (interest) in the *Republic* to describe the *ekgonos* (offspring) instead of speaking directly of the good in itself, and he associates this filial metaphor with financial capital and good or goods, in spite of the persistent association of writing and "capital" in the *Phaedrus*. In attaching the notion of capital to the good, he is obliged to stress the nature of the good as both an original source and a permanent absence. Yet, while Plato does *not* construe the good as a non-negotiable radical absence, is not writing itself capital's set of promissory notes or mere abstract tokens of postponed value? Derrida defines writing as just such postponed fulfillment,[4] and because for

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3. On Phaedrus' role as an "impresario," see G. R. F. Ferrari, *Listening to the Cicadas: A Study of Plato's Phaedrus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 4-9ff.

4. On the metaphor of *tokos*, see Plato, *Republic*, tr. by Paul Shovey, in Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds. *The Collected Dialogues* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), 506e. Derrida, *op. cit.*, pp.81-84. On this structural configuration, see Rémi Brague, "En marge de 'La pharmacie de Platon' de J. Derrida," in *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 71 (1973), pp.271-277. On the perpetual postponement of the Derridean sign, see Derrida, "Tympan," in his *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. by Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), pp.ix-xxix.

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him this postponement is never consummated, it remains tantamount to the emptiness and objectivity of death. His own construal of writing as empty seems therefore very close to that of the sophists and rhetoricians for whom it functions as a mere tool. As such, they paradoxically hypostasize writing so that it becomes an ideal science which, like Lysias' scroll, both mystified and appropriated beneath Phaedrus' cloak, can be transferred equivalently to any place and is unaltered by the passage of time. This fetishization is continuous with the drainage of the *eros* depicted in Socrates' travesty of sophistic love, when his "nonlover" deliberately debases his beloved in order to guard against his loss to other suitors. Might this suggest concomitantly that Derrida's insistence on absence or the postponement of value is nothing other than capital's fear of itself, or the fear of losing its recuperability through investment in any specific desire or intrinsic value?

The Physical Manifestation of the Good

In seeking to associate, contrary to evidence, both the Socratic good and orality with capital, Derrida simply does not *consider* the Platonic alternative — that instead of being at once radical absence *and* original presence, the good might be an inaccessible, inexhaustible, and incircumscribable plenitude. This explains Socrates' demur at speaking directly of the good, preferring instead the use of figures and traces. His withdrawal from such direct approach to the good has nothing to do with capital's fear of itself, nor with a metaphysical construal of the good as an unapproachable and therefore fetishized ideal. Rather, the good cannot be *circumscribed* in the ordinary manner and is not accessible to technical knowing. Instead, it must be allowed to arise indirectly, through supplementary figures which eventually illuminate its nature. Derrida's association of the good with capital betrays a reading of the forms as scientific postulations verifiable by the immediacy of facts — as ontic rather than ontological — whereas in this dialogue Socrates seeks to expose the dangerous dishonesty of such an epistemology. Derrida not only links the good with ontic objectivity or "presence," but also with *absence* and perpetually withdrawing, abstract value. Yet, *this* explanation of Socrates' reluctance to deal with the good directly overlooks its *transcendent* nature, which makes immanent propositions concerning its content impossible. Such transcendence is not a fictitious enshrouded interiority, or even a retreating esoteric absence, as can be seen from Plato's icon of the sun in the *Republic,* by which he illustrates the ecstatic nature of the good.[5] As the

5. *Republic,* 507a-509c.

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source of all light, the sun is more difficult to see than anything else, but it is a *beneficent* mystery which lets things be seen in their true nature, while itself remaining obliquely visible. In addition to letting things be seen, the sun *generates* them, for although it is *beyond being*,[6] it is the ground of all being(s). Insisting on its continuity with radical absence, Derrida gives this *epekeina tes ousias* an immanentist definition.[7] But the good is precisely "beyond" the distinction of presence and absence. Its transcendence does not signify emptiness, nor that Derridean postponement which reduces absence to objectivity, since the sun which shines light onto beings is present in the gifts of insight, truth, and beauty. The fact that it cannot be grasped by a *mathema* and is unsayable does not make it continuous with absence. Rather, its "presence" is articulated through the gifts it bestows, the beyond-being which, as difference, gives things to be, and which (in Derridean terminology) *disseminates.* This contrasts with Derrida's *différance*, which is related to his notion of writing. It also conflicts with a perpetual postponement of an impossible giving and a radical disjunction of giver and gift.

Plato betrays the way the good transcends the distinction between presence and absence in designating it by the feminine *idea* as opposed to the neuter *eidos.* Both were more or less interchangeable in the Greek of Plato's time, and yet he never refers to the good in the neuter, while he uses that form for other ideas. The neuter *eidos* suggests an object and can be translated as a (visible) "appearance," while the feminine *idea* suggests something closer to a "looking toward the good" than an objective visibility.[8] As beyond being, the good is also beyond appearance, beyond objectification, beyond "capita." Indeed, in the *Phaedrus*, Plato portrays the transcendence of the good, its being beyond presence-and-absence, as a kind of *contagion,* for its plenitude spills over into immanence in such a way that the good is revealed in the beauty of physical particulars. The philosopher who, through the dialectic, has regained knowledge of the good, is wont to glimpse its transcendence in the mundane order and is thus given to revere all physicality according to its participation in this spiritual sun. Concomitantly, Socrates is unwilling to speak directly not only about the good, but also about anything at all since *nothing is* outside the good's perview. He always prefers to communicate by means of the openness of

6. *Ibid.,* 509b.
7. Derrida, *op. cit.*, p.168.
8. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, tr. by P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 27.

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figures, the reserve of irony, or through the doxological mode of encomium. His reluctance to verify the truth of a myth, to isolate the origin of a legend or to speak directly of the soul, is related to the presence of transcendence within immanence. And this affects the philosopher who, because of his communion through memory, participates in the divine order (249c-d).

This excessiveness underlines the radicalization of the sense of time suggested by Socratic dialectic, for the good subsists within an *eternal* anteriority (247e). Thus, even in Plato, recollection of the good is not simply an "aesthetic" or retrospective repetition (to use Søren Kierkegaard's terminology), meaning a mere identical re-attainment of something rooted in "the past," which cancels out what has happened since. Rather, the eternal transcendence of the good, which overflows into physicality, has a temporalizing impact, since philosophical access to the good arises *not* as something subjectively *a priori,* but rather in and through the forward-moving existence of what is constituted by the good. Such temporality does not compromise that knowledge, but rather constitutes its very possibility: the good arrives through time and, therefore, time is not merely a ladder which can be kicked away after the job is done. The philosopher does not fetishize the present, stem the flow of time, or forego the necessary narrative seeking the good through time. By embracing his human narrative, he gradually comes to know himself — a knowledge coterminous with that of the realities toward which he strives. To this end, he inquires into every detail of the world, at once remote from and yet immanent within his physical environment. The soul's charioteer makes his journey to the forms by accepting its contingency, obeying the strictures which at once limit and facilitate its advance. For this reason, in the *Phaedrus* Socratic desire does not lack its object, but attains its goal in and through its act of desiring. Similarly, the sensible husbandman carefully engages time-honored Demetrian agricultural practices of unhurried placement of components and respect of the seasons in order to secure generational continuity (276b, 277a).

The depiction of temporality as the condition of possibility for knowledge of the good is echoed by the way the qualification of the memory of eternal realities by forgetfulness is *not* a purely private phenomenon, but discloses the nature of the transcendence of the good. The philosopher can only experience the good positively, by slipping away from it. Since the good is always more than what is immediately given, it cannot be grasped or appropriated, but only a sophistic consciousness would interpret this as a *compromise.* Derrida's invocation of the *chora* or matrix in the *Timaeus,* which distributes the difference between form and appearance, and thus

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between truth and non-truth, suggesting a yet more fundamental distinction between truth and non-truth, seems to overlook an alternative account of time and physicality as being as "real" as the forms in the *Phaedrus*.[9] Although this dialogue does not explicitly construe temporality in relation to the forms, or as what enables participation in the good, Socrates' more positive reading of physicality (combined with the theme of the higher *eros*) suggests a link between the processes of coming-to-be in time with the lure of the good and a concomitant overcoming of the duality itself.

In addition to demonstrating that Plato did *not* wish to drive a wedge between form and appearance, the strongly positive view of *methexis* (participation) in the *Phaedrus* frees him from the charge of otherworldliness, for the philosophical ascent does not result in a "loss" of love for particular beautiful things, since the particular itself participates in beauty. Thus the philosopher is synonymous with the lover of beauty (248d). Although, as Socrates acknowledges, the philosopher shies away from human interests, turning his attention toward the divine, and is often thought to be insane, it is precisely within the physical world that he recognizes a likeness to reality, and then is "stricken with amazement and cannot control himself" (241a). Furthermore, because of the transcendence of the good, this resemblance is no mechanistic mimesis but a *constitutive* representation of that in which it participates, which can only take place by *maintaining* its distance and otherness. Hence, in a sense, the "deviation" through the physical form is unavoidable and, for this reason, when the philosopher sees a face or a form which is a good image of beauty, he immediately recognizes its divine quality and would willingly offer sacrifice to this image itself (251 a-b). The beauty of what possesses form functions as the worldly image of the good.[10] Therefore, in the *Philebus* its proportion, measure and truth are identified as the structural components of the good, which appears *as* the beautiful.[11] Although the good remains beyond all being, including other forms, and is seen as distinct from all mere *onta,* it is within everything and can be seen as distinct from everything only insofar as it shines out from within everything. Thus, in the *Phaedrus* the myth of *eros* singles out beauty as the only idea which preserves something of the former lustrousness of an idea even after its entry into the physical order. Beauty is what shines forth most of all and

9. Derrida, *op. cit.*, pp.160-61.

10. Zdravko Planinc, *Plato's Political Philosophy: Prudence in the Republic and the Laws* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1991), p. 19.

11. *Philebus*, tr. by R. Hackforth, *The Collected Dialogues*, 64e-65a.

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inspires love (250d), provoking the lover to strive for what is above the passions. Since beauty "shines forth" (within the visible), the good's *dunamis* or potential is displayed in the beautiful (*ekphainesthai*). Hence, in the *Republic* the good is characterized not as existing for itself but "in that in which it exists and which it effects,"[12] in such a way that the *dunamis* of the good is to be found in the manifold of what the *dunamis* brings about. Therefore, the image of the good in the beauty of physicality is not just an empty "version" or simulacrum. If the philosopher can be accused of neglecting "things below" (249d), like the insane bird, it is not that he turns away from physicality itself (for that would deny him access to the good); rather, he neglects a *mundane apprehension* of physicality as merely immanent or crudely separated from the whole, and all the concomitant proprieties of property, custom, and conventional status (252a). By contrast, the immanence of the divine urges the philosopher from place to place, yearning to see the beautiful again.

It is rather *the sophist* who denies genuine apprehension of the physical world, as can be seen during the diversion along the Ilissus, when the discussion about the myth of Boreas (229b-230a) elicits a revelation from both characters of their negotiation of physicality.[13] Phaedrus exploits the purity of the water associated with the Boreas myth to encourage conversation, while for Socrates this topographical story provides an opportunity to challenge demythologizers and to introduce his special reverence for ancient wisdom and *eros.* Similarly, Phaedrus' manipulative choice of the shady arbor prompts Socrates' encomium in which he systematically catalogues every aspect of the scene, dividing the physical stimuli according to the various senses to which they appeal and assigning to each its own superlative, such as "spreading and lofty," "very fragrant," "very cool" (230b). He examines the soil and notes that it is well watered by the spring and fertile for the grass as well as for the plane and agnus trees. He notes the sweet and cool quality of the water, and verifies this with his toes (230b). The winds are moderate. He also scrutinizes the local inhabitants,

12. *Republic,* 477c-d.

13. With the exceptions of the *Protagoras*, the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium*, it is unusual to find such detailed topographical attention in Plato's dialogues. But in these three dialogues, the expository device of a distinct narrational device is responsible for the attention given to these details, whereas in the *Phaedrus* the interlocutors themselves provide access into the landscape, into a Phaedran sense of the secondariness or auxiliary nature of these details as mere "background." See Ferrari, *op. cit.*, p. 2. See also Drew H. Hyland, "The Place of Philosophy," in his *Finitude and Transcendence in the Platonic Dialogues* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 13-33.

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the cicadas, the presence of Achelous and the nymphs. The arbor thus enables him to demonstrate the technique of dialectic specifically as an art of *differentiation.* But it also reveals its definitively non-meretricious motivation, for Socrates' exhaustive panegyric is spontaneous and uncommissioned: "By Hera!" he exclaims, as if possessed from without by the intensity of his surroundings. Furthermore, his reaction is in full accord with his description of the philosophical lover in his second speech who, when struck by the prospect of the beautiful boy, recognizing in him the beautiful itself, lets slip all regard for ordinary values and attachments in a way that seems insane (249c-e).

The pervasiveness of the good in the physical order transgresses mundane proprieties of space. This is reflected in Phaedrus' description of Socrates' reaction to the arbor as *atopic*. According to his commercial sensibilities, the environment is mere background extension. Thus, Socrates' treatment of each tiny detail as significant seems strange, out of place, foreign and insane. For Socrates and the philosopher-lover, however, spontaneous adoration is inspired, through *eros*, by the memory of the beautiful itself, which now infiltrates every aspect of life, great and small, in such a way that the "ordinary" becomes the "extraordinary." While Phaedrus has relied on the physical particulars remaining as a mere backdrop, Socrates' holistic and harmonious understanding of interconnectedness disallows any such hierarchical demarcation of phenomena. Thus, a transcendent apprehension of physical space, while it might mundanely seem to deflect attention from particular differences within the earthly order, in fact appreciates them better, for it is constitutive of those differences and their genuine apprehension. This is primarily because such a philosophical gaze discloses the real beyond its finite appearances. Socrates thus combines the physical with the *psuchical* and *erotic* so as to reunite distinctions of time and eternity, background and foreground, finite and transcendent. He does this not in order to remove, but precisely to *allow* difference.

Contrary to Derrida, who regards dialectic as opposed to differentiation, Socrates' critique of sophistry suggests that without knowledge of the good, differentiation itself is impossible. Socratic differentiation is not a scientific method in the modern sense, since its "object" is not demonstrable in the manner of a proof. Rather, it seeks to achieve two things. First, it seeks to clarify the nature of things, such as speeches, and to differentiate between types in order to match them to appropriate souls (271a-d, 252d, 277b-c). Second, it seeks to disclose what is simultaneously

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already known and yet *unknowable* (in the sense of a totality). The suggestion of prior familiarity would seem to rule out the quest for novelty, if one is thinking in terms of scientific and empirical inquiry, especially since Socrates assimilates knowledge of the good, via recollection, with self-knowledge, which he explicitly contrasts with the empirical epistemology of sophistry (229e).

Nonetheless, for Socrates it is only by means of the dialogic art of differentiation (dialectic) that it is possible to transcend the confusion of mere opinions and prejudices, and only the dialectician, who holds steadfastly to the good, is in a position to differentiate the true from the false. When Socrates has delivered his first speech, in which he denies the philosophical life, his *daimonion* compels him to retract what he has said, and in responding to this, he unveils, both literally and figuratively, the nature of the true dialectician, for he had covered his head in delivering his anti-erotic speech (257a) and only in his recantation is he once again himself. Only then does he uncover or recall true distinctions, identifying *eros* as a divine gift and distinguishing between "good" and "bad" madness — an essential distinction if human beings are to have a true understanding of themselves and what they experience in love. Dialectic differentiation is something other than sophistic classification because it is combined with *synopsis,* which sees things together as one and only thereby as different (266b). Both recognition as self-knowledge and recognition as knowledge of everything else are a matter of seeing together and separating out. Differences in the finite can only be apprehended in terms of their orientation to, and yet separation from, the transcendent realm.

This coincidence of synopsis and differentiation suggests something anticipating a non-identical or analogical repetition as a precondition for knowledge, in contrast to the sophistic synecdochic epistemology which mistakes the particularity and identity of a given datum for the whole truth, and is thus associated with false separation (266a-b) and confusion. Such an anticipation is apparent in Socrates' contraposition of contemporary technocrats, who are careless of difference, and traditional dialecticians. He opposes the true practitioner of an art to the mere mechanical technician (268a), the poet to the rhapsode, the possessed Pythia to the rational art of augury (244c-d), the Hippocratic physician, who studies all bodily functions, to the cursory physician, who sees only superficial symptoms (268a-270d). Similarly, Socrates distinguishes between the genuine orator, who considers all the reasons for the success of his various methods, and matches particular speeches to the nature of the soul to which it is

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addressed, and the rhetorician, who merely seeks to elicit instant responses irrespective of truth or suitability (267c-d). The sophistic component in each of these pairs can be associated with the Lysian non-lover and the nonlover of Socrates' first (anerotic) speech, who both contractualize *eros.* This abuse is synonymous with a simultaneous excess of utility and pleasure, reducible to one and the same pursuit of cheaper versions and shortcuts to traditional goals. In other words, when sophistic methodology is transposed to the moral sphere of everyday life, it becomes immoral or amoral, debased by efforts to guarantee success in the pursuit of pleasure.

The synecdochic consciousness of sophistry seeks to derive ontology from subjective methodological procedures by means of accelerated methods deriving the particularity and atomistic nature of beings from the partiality and compartmentalized nature of its epistemology. According to this scheme, clarity is synonymous with empirical certainty and fixity, both of which are to be found in the facility of writing (277d). On the other hand, divine clarity and eternity are transcendent and remain mysterious (e.g., 237a). It is also in sharp contrast with the only means whereby such clarity can be obtained, the dialectic, which can only remain partial. Sophistic cartographies are thus unachievable and dishonest, since human life is always in the midst of things. The clarity of empiricist conclusions is an illusion fostered by the falsely isolated and inert nature of its artificial findings, just as the apparent fixity of the text, taken for the noumenal permanence of truth, is a mirage, since the text is exposed to many different arbitrary interpretations (275d-e).This is unlike the open-ended yet consistent "writing on the soul," which continues forever (277a). The "fixity" parodied by the sophists can be attained only in the unshakeable conviction of a certain way of life, where clarity and steadfastness of personal conviction are found through philosophical dialogue and wariness of all claims to instant certitude. The words "written with intelligence in the mind of the learner" (276a) is written *memory*, and so Socratic truth emerges from the temporal trace of anamnesis, as "the living and breathing word of him who knows" (276a). There is no metaphysics of presence here, but rather an infinite series of speakers and traces of memory (259b, 274c, 275b). The mythical tradition thus passes from generation to generation, written, through memory, in the soul, whence it "spring(s) up in other minds . . . capable of continuing the process for ever" (277a). The seriousness with which Socrates deals with myth suggests that a *tradition* of recollection is not altogether indispensable for an individual act of remembering eternal forms.

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This account of mythical tradition is to be contraposed to the metaphysics of the book whose physical and moral mobility, absence of situation, author and *eros*, plus mobility of value, do not detract from, but rather enforce, its fundamental character as an objective presence abstracted from time. For its abstraction from time and place is readily fetishized as an absolute origin, and its mobility is commensurate with an unhinged freedom that can attain a formalistic closure. In other words, Derrida's emphasis on writing is a denial of the living and dying physical *body.*

In opposition to the epistemology of the book, Socrates proposes the partial nature of all knowledge, and suggests that the only access to it is via specific physical performance, i.e., through *language* — an aspect of the physical world accessible through Plato's dialogue. Indeed, Socrates' teachings cannot be discovered by stripping-away language as a kind of frivolous elaboration of the essence of truth (as sophists might hope). In the dialogues, language itself is not an inessential "detour,"[14] but is integral to the realization of truth. Furthermore, the dialogic structure obfuscates any attempt to discover abstract principles or essences of knowledge, as well as attempts to construct a compendium-like understanding of Plato's or Socrates' "intentions"; its dramatic form discourages sophistry in the act of reading and its forward-moving dialogic dynamic removes any grounds for the expectation of a previous essence. Consequently, *genuine* intellectual clarity is obtainable only when what is to be "known" is allowed to remain open and mysterious through a reverent attitude.

Platonic versus Derridean Supplementation

Given this account of physicality and time in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates' account of *eros* and orality can be seen as a theory of supplementation and the Derridean colonization of supplementation by writing as tantamount to a metaphysics of presence. The philosopher-lover remains steadfastly guided by his vision of the good, which is nonetheless *beyond being.* For this reason, his journey through life is simultaneously *erotic* and *hermeneutic.* It is erotic because it is the power of *eros* to interpret and transport "human things to the gods and divine things to men; entreaties and sacrifices from below, and ordinances and requitals from above."[15] Thus it acts as a kind of angelic mediation between the mortal and the immortal. The philosophical life is *hermeneutic* because it involves the perpetual

14. Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
15. *Symposium*, tr. by Michael Joyce, *The Collected Dialogues* 202e.

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discernment of divine mediation through physicality, "deposited" and emanating there because of *eros*. The erotic *methexis* of mortal and immortal is not a physical or direct mingling (*Theos de anthropo ou mignutai*)[16] but through the mediation of *eros,* the human and the divine supplement one another (*sumpleroo*)[17] — a fact Plato makes no attempt to conceal. The philosopher's communion with memory not only nourishes his soul and that of his beloved, but also "causes God to be divine" (*pros hoisper theos on theios estin*, 249c). This is related to the notion of *dunamis* in the *Sophist*, which is the idea that the definition of real being is the capacity of something to affect something else, or, concomitantly, to be affected, to however small a degree.[18] Participation in the divine (and it is unclear in Plato to what extent the divine is to be assimilated with the good) approaches a mutually constitutive supplementation facilitated by the relational overflowing of *eros*. Of course, in the end the form of the good does *not* need to be supplemented, but this is because it is good as a self-supplementing reality which allows a certain privileged position in advance. It is this self-supplementing power to affect (*dynamic*) which Derrida overlooks, since he assumes that the good is a simple objective presence *opposed* to supplementation. This makes the good available to a Cartesian measuring gaze and misconstrues Socratic recollection as establishing equally Cartesian "foundations." Yet even in the *Republic,* it is only under the light of the good that one is able to see the other forms, and if they require this supplementation of ideal light in order to reveal themselves, then *all* the forms must be entirely unlike the objects of empirical science. And, again, supplementation is reciprocal. To regard a table, one must have a broader idea of what a table is, even though one is only *reminded* of this broader idea by the empirical, particular table, since the idea is *not* something one possesses *a priori*.[19] Thus knowledge is *an act of judgment* which hovers somewhere between the particular and the ideal, offered by the mediation of *eros*, which disallows any isolation of a privileged epistemological foundation or starting-point.

Despite this implicit epistemology of supplementary traces, Derrida argues that "what Plato dreams of is a memory with no sign," i.e., with no "supplement."[20] This overlooks Socrates' erotic and hermeneutic

16. *Symposium*, 203a.
17. *Ibid.*, 202e.
18. *Sophist*, tr. by F. M. Cornford, *The Collected Dialogues* 247d-e.
19. See Jean-Louis Chrétien, *L'Inoubliable et l'Inespéré* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991), p. 20.
20. Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

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understanding of the philosopher-lover's striving toward the good as commensurate with the act of knowledge. While signs, both natural and conventional, are the essential and only route to the good through the trace of memory, it is the *sophists* who regard supplementation brought about by language as a secondary form or a mere vehicle for exchange and transaction. The rhetors commodify language, just as Phaedrus threatens violence in order to obtain a quantity of words (236c). Furthermore, it could be argued that it is Derrida, not Socrates, who suppresses the link between language and physicality, for in associating writing with parricide or the absence of the father, and orality with a metaphysics of presence, he subtly denies the fact that language of any kind requires *bodily* presence. In attempting to distinguish his own position from Plato's, Derrida argues that language needs no speaker, since it is more fundamentally a trace of a speaker who was never present to begin with. However, the Platonic doctrine of recollection may state the same thing in other terms, yet in such a way as (*unlike* Derrida) to allow the physicality and communality of all language. In the *Phaedrus* there is no account of a self-present autonomous speaker outside the series of traces represented by external (divine, human, physical) inspiration or a prior *akoe* (or orally received myth or tradition). In the *Ion* Socrates explains to his interlocutor that his speaking well on Homer is not a skill of his own but a divine gift impelling him, like a magnet, the "stone of Heraclea," which "does not simply attract the iron rings, just by themselves; it also imparts to the rings a force enabling them to do the same thing as the stone itself . . . to attract another ring, so that sometimes a chain is formed, quite a long one, of iron rings, suspended from one another. For all of them, however, their power depends on that loadstone. Just so the Muse. She first makes men inspired, and then through these inspired ones others share in the enthusiasm, and a chain is formed . . . ."[21] Derrida's written model suggests no people at all: only a word which comes from nowhere, an autonomous word which conceals or violently eradicates its origins and dictates to its "author," rendering him entirely passive before a disembodied and (spiritual?) power.

Derrida claims that the reason why Socrates apparently considers the supplement dangerous is that "(i)ts slidings slip it out of the alternative presence/absence."[22] However, it is precisely a movement beyond the alternative of presence and absence (which Derrida *cannot* really think, except as an aporetic undecideability) which is advocated and made possible by

21. *Ion,* tr. by Lane Cooper, *The Collected Dialogues,* 533d-e.
22. Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

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the transcendence of the good. For Socrates, there can be no absolute experience of either presence or absence since, first, the good always exceeds what manifests it physically and can never be grasped in an absolute presence; and second, because of the excessiveness of transcendence, the good is always overflowing into what, through *eros,* strives to participate in it. A complete absence would suggest two discrete realms — the forms and physicality — which for Plato would be an absurdity. Concomitantly, for Socrates dissemination is not a "risk," as Derrida describes it,[23] but rather is natural to the contagion and excess of the good itself.

This excessiveness, however, is not continuous with an unstructured saturation, and because of the magnitude of the good, dissemination must be carefully channelled. Therefore, one must prepare carefully before being exposed to its manifestation. This is important with respect to the debate regarding writing and orality, for while Derrida's argument that writing is more "democratic" may be valid, several qualifications must be added.[24] First, it is possible for *writing* to be used as an esoteric investment of bureaucratic control and, as such, it does not provide an unquestionable democracy. Second, Derrida does not deal with the question of the availability of texts, of censorship or quality, plus the fact that one must first learn to read, nor with the question of different languages and exclusive codes. Whereas, by contrast, the manipulative potential of the text is recognized in the *Phaedrus* by its hiddenness beneath the cloak, plus Phaedrus' use of it to seduce his companion outside the city walls, as well as by explicit comments regarding the methods of irresponsible rhetors. In a similar fashion, Derrida does not negotiate Plato's concern with the way in which writing's potential saturation of availability cannot be *channelled* and disallows differentiation of what is "best" for a particular person at a particular time (275d, 276a-b), although here *phronesis* is guided by traditional grammars of differentiation and dissemination analogous to those guiding agriculture (260a-b). Thus it is not differentiation or dissemination which Socrates considers dangerous — indeed, it is an *aim* of the philosopher-lover to communicate his vision of the good to his beloved — but *arbitrary* or undifferentiating "dissemination." The latter,

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23. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 144-145. Although writing could promote equal justice, it has been argued that fifth century Greek historians and dramatists portrayed writing as an essential tool of tyrants, who not only issue written decrees but also "inscribe" human bodies with brands and cut up land with compasses and rules. For a discussion of the despotic overtones associated with writing, see Steiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-185.

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like the merely written text, undermines itself, and cancels its own message in its inability to respond to the unexpected.

Eros and Exteriority

The suggestion in the *Sophist* that time and physicality are *as real* as the forms could be seen as anticipating a nihilistic position whereby "non-being" is implicitly as real as being. But in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates' configuration of *eros* as an alternative ontology overcomes the possibility of such nihilism.

In his discussion of the story of Oreithyia's death, which is introduced into the dialogue by Phaedrus (229b), who wishes to arouse in Socrates a desire to converse, Derrida describes the violation of her life by the involvement of her playmate Pharmacea, underlining all the connotations of exteriority, slippage, and contamination inherent in that latter name. This reading enables him to maintain the notion of an interiority persisting in a state of monadic, virginal purity shattered by the penetration of Pharmacea: "Through her games, Pharmacia [*sic*] has dragged down to death a virginal purity and an unpenetrated interior."[25] However, Pharmacea was not in the least involved in Oreithyia's death but, rather, it was ". . . a blast of Boreas, the north wind [which] pushed her off the neighboring rocks as she was playing with Pharmacea, and when she had died in this manner she was said to have been carried off by Boreas" (229c). Is it enough that Pharmacea was present on the occasion of the Boreal blast to hold her accountable for Oreithyia's death? An alternative reading of interiority in Plato would be that it is open to the outside without violation, since reception of exteriority is represented in the *Phaedrus* as ontologically constitutive, whereas Derrida characterizes Plato's view as that the "perfection of a living being would consist in its having no relation at all with any outside."[26] The dialectical "antidote" succeeds by allowing a disease to work itself out without the intervention of drugs, which Derrida regards as tantamount to a refusal of external "supplementation."[27] However, this Socratic psuchic physics is not to be seen in terms of privileging a tranquil interior, but rather as a suspicion of sophistic short-cuts represented in this example by the *pharmakos* (drug). The metaphorical connotation suggested by the texts is clearly that of "quick fix" rather than "alien intrusion." Dialectics is itself a kind of *pharmakon*,[28] precisely because it

25. Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

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involves some confusion of exterior and interior. But where Derrida would argue that dialectics is only a *limited* ecstasy, for Plato it is rather *a full* and *excessive* ecstasy. In a false ecstasy reason, for Plato, is simply displaced by violence, manipulation and sophistic exteriority, whereas in dialectical ecstasy, *reason itself is* defined as displacement, as *atopic. Eros* does not offer an ecstasy under wraps.

The ecstasy which takes place in Socrates' account of the philosopher-lover would suggest that *eros* introduces an element of *constitutive loss* of self. There is no clinging to interiority here. Socrates shows that a delimited *eros,* such as the hidden, autoerotic, rationalized seductions of the Lysian non-lover no longer qualifies as *eros* at all; is sophistic manipulation. By contrast, the philosopher-lover of Socrates' second speech is neither delimited nor contained, but "can no longer control himself" (250a). *Eros* "flows into him, and some, when he is filled, overflows outside" (255c).[29] This radicalization of the division between inside and outside reaches its optimum in the complex process of dialectical recognition, for when the philosopher-lover glimpses the good in the physical world he receives from without what he recognizes from within his memory — what at one time he had received from without, at the time when his soul was in harmony with the good. Because the Socratic self is constituted from without, knowledge of the self, Socrates' ultimate epistemological goal is knowledge of what is "outside" the self, which is the good.

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29. This metaphor of *Eros* as liquid allows recognition of a structure of oppositions and parodic assimilations in the dialogue. Phaedrus draws attention to the purity of the Ilissus, where allegedly Oreithyia once bathed. And this stream's purity means that it also represents for Socrates a means of escape from Phaedrus' threats (242a). Water is linked with purification, immortality, inspiration, and orality (243d, 251b), and is opposed to the sterility of the dry, as when the soul is deprived of the company of his beloved, his feathers grow dry, pricking the passages of their growth (251d). The interpersonal overflowing of *Eros* (255c) is contraposed to the auto-erotic concealment of Lysias' scroll beneath Phaedrus' cloak, in the same way as Demetrian agriculture is contrasted with the dry, overheated, licentious and abortive growth of seeds in the gardens of Adonis (276b-d), grown in noon day heat — an analogy introduced to elucidate the differences between orality and writing. The unending cycle of interpersonal nourishment provided by Demetrian agriculture (277a) contrasts with the hopeless and wasteful frivolity of the garden of letters (276d), its rootlessness, hiddenness, and absence of the higher *Eros*. The little pots of the Adonians, parodies of the vast earth, are carried about, portable like the text, and deposited high on rooftops, private and transgressive spaces. The unripened gardens of Adonis represent the forcing of life into death, like Adonis into the cask, a harnessing and violent appropriation of the beautiful into the arid and inert timelessness of objecthood. See Marcel Detienne, *The Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology*, tr. by J. Lloyd (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: The Humanities Press, 1977), and R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought about the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

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Despite this positive account of exteriority, Derrida argues that for Plato "(h)ealth and virtue . . . always proceed from within,"[30] and that he wishes to exclude what lies without by hopelessly maintaining the boundary. In response to this, one could first restate the argument that, throughout the dialogue, the act of recognition is initially triggered from without by some element of the physical world (e.g., 251b), and that the *telos* of recognition is simultaneously and *ambiguously* internal and external — self-knowledge and memory of the good respectively, as Socrates explains. Thus, when the philosopher-lovers "search within themselves to find the nature of their god they are successful because they have been compelled to keep their eyes fixed on the god, and as they reach and grasp him by memory they are inspired and receive from him character and habits, so far as it is possible for a man to have part in god" (253a). In this explanation, eternity seems more contemporaneous than the present moment, memory more prescient than fact, and the inside-outside dichotomy is dismantled. Furthermore, the distinction between active and passive is also disturbed, since the gaze of memory is a *passive* reception of what is remembered, and yet philosophical recognition requires an act of judgment of likeness, as well as an "*active*" yearning or desire to recognize.

Plato's relativization of boundaries is not simply a levelling of inside and outside, but at times seems to err in favor of exteriority. When the philosopher-lover recognizes the good in his beloved, he reaches a state of *captivation* by him, characterized by self-forgetfulness. The soul is willing to surrender all freedom and become captive to the beloved (252a-b). The ultimate moment of self-knowledge is characterized therefore by self-loss and release (259bff). It follows that this 'horizontal' transgression of inside and outside (the self and the beautiful other) is involved simultaneously with a "vertical" transgression (the self and god) in a *chiasmus* which throws open all boundaries.

Socrates maintains a suspicion of all violent or insidious exteriorities, which merely affirm the division of interior and exterior. The modes of exteriority which are given a positive account are those which do not violate the boundary by force, but which inspire a willing opening of the inside to receive the outside, whether divine or earthly. This is seen in Socrates' honoring of all sources of inspiration: the cicadas, the nymphs, the statues, the physical environment, and the gods. He explains to Phaedrus that the divinities of the place are the cause of his speech, ". . . and

30. Derrida, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-2.

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perhaps, too, the prophets of the Muses, who are singing above our heads [and] may have granted this boon to us by inspiration; at any rate, I possess no art of speaking" (262d). In his mythical hymn, Socrates attributes inspiration to Stesichorus, who uttered an ancient palinode to atone for his blasphemy (244a). This example portrays *purification from without,* a *katharmos archaios* (243a), received from the exteriority of tradition and facilitated via language, another kind of exteriority. Other positive exteriorities include the *akoe* origins of myth, Socrates' *daimonion* responsible for his wise and moderate actions, and the inspiration for the content of his speech, filling him "through the ears from some alien stream" (235d).

Moreover, when he explains the beneficial effect of the divine madness for the philosopher, Socrates enumerates three further modes of erotic possession which render provisional the inside-outside dichotomy. First, the prophetic madness of the Pythia at Delphi is said to have benefited the nation of Greece on many occasions (244a-d); second, the madness whereby officiants ritually purified ancient families of their ancestral crimes, which is another example of purification from without, and ensures that "diseases and the greatest troubles" be released by the entering-in of erotic madness (244d-e); and third, the madness of the poet seized by the Muses when he is inspired to glorify the deeds of ancient heroes (245a-b). Such forms of erotic possession are portrayed as eudaimonistic, bringing happiness, release from ills of many kinds, and purification by means of captivation and penetration from without (244e). Thus, contrary to Derrida's claim that Platonic metaphysics is to be found in a privileging of truth-as-presence, and of subjectivity as interiority, from the enumeration of the myriad stimuli in which the philosopher-lover is immersed, an account of the self as constituted by its opening to receive its environment, both physical and divine, would be more adequate.

The Socratic Gaze

In keeping with this interpretation of the interior-exterior relation in the *Phaedrus*, one can also modify Derrida's characterization of Platonism as promoting a purely *ocular* epistemology by stressing that the Socratic gaze is *erotic*. While the faculty of vision is hailed as "the sharpest of the physical senses" (250d), and in his mythical hymn he prays not to be deprived of his sight (257a) because of its crucial role in the process of recognition of the good, and while the metaphor of knowledge as vision is dominant in the *Republic*, this philosophical gaze is not of mastery. It is, first, a *double* vision of empirical sight combined with

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recognition or *recollection*, which hovers between activity and passivity, whereas the sophistic parodic counterpart is both secret and wholly active (228b) — a gaze Socrates implies is subject to closure by his action of veiling himself when delivering his sophistic speech (237a). The sophistic gaze seeks to master and appropriate its object, and is typical of one whose soul has forgotten the realities, for when such a soul beholds a manifestation of the beautiful, "he does not revere it . . . and is not afraid or ashamed to pursue pleasure in violation of nature" (251a). By contrast, the erotic gaze is non-violent and reverential (251a). The charioteer of the soul "falls backward in reverence" when "his memory is *borne back* [passive of *phero*] to the true nature of beauty" (254b). Significantly, this gaze does not arise from an autonomous subject, but via the ambiguous action/passion of recognition becomes a gaze which receives into itself what offers itself to be recognized. "(T)he effluence of beauty enters him through the eyes" (251b), from without to within (and not the reverse), so that what is gazed on does not remain external to the gazer, and forms, through its mediation of the good, a source of nourishment to his soul. The gazer "receives the particles [of beauty] which flow to it . . ." (251c) by means of a gaze which is neither outward-bound mastery nor totalizing (250d). Unlike the manipulative assessing gaze of the sophist, the philosophical gaze is *subordinate* to that on which it gazes, which is the good. The yoke under which truth serves is not the ocular gaze but the transcendent good.

A gaze of mastery, by definition, issues from a firm *topos*, a ground of strength and action, of bounded propriety and clearly delineated space. It also assumes a contained subject, which must therefore be a *written* subject, such as Lysias, who is *not* a genuine subject because he does not exceed his mercantile rather than citizen status, echoed in the containment of his language beneath the cloak. The erotic gaze, by contrast, issues from a mobile, nomadic, atopic space (25 le). It is no "stronghold," but a ground which moves from place to place, neither pre-established nor owned, but determined solely by the path of the good. The soul which yearns to see the good does not dominate what it sees; it is "perplexed and maddened," hastening from place to place whenever it hopes to see the beautiful one (25 ld). Despite this explicit reference to the shifting ground of philosophy, Derrida insists that the "Socratic word does not wander, stays at home . . . ,"[31] secure in its autochthony. By "home," Derrida means the *polis*, the patriarchal site of capital and presence. The Socratic word "stays at home," but its home is in the good — a "site" beyond boundaries which transfigures all

31. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

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emplotments. The philosopher does not wander or stray from the path guided by the good, but that path could lead anywhere — *it* "wanders."

The erotic gaze is therefore neither totalizing nor rationalizing, for its "object" cannot be seen once and for all. One glimpse alone does not satisfy. The lover yearns all the more to see again, differently, in another place, anywhere. What is seen by the erotic gaze is *received* (as happiness) by the lover in his act of passing it on (253c, 255c); for *eros* is, by definition, an interpersonal flow, just as "an echo rebounds from smooth, hard surfaces and returns whence it came" (255c). The beloved "sees himself in his lover as in a mirror . . . and in his absence, like him, he is filled with yearning such as he inspires, and Love's image, requited love, dwells within him, but he calls it . . . friendship" (255d). The erotic gaze institutes an ontologically constitutive loss of self — a redemptive return of what one loves above all but is willing to give away: the very antithesis of capital.

The Mediations of Egypt

Socrates construes his attack on sophistry in terms of resistance to time, supplementarity and difference in favor of self-presence, organlessness and identity. Recollection and dialectic work by means of differentiation, an embracing of the human narrative, *methexis* and the ecstatic movements of the higher *eros*. It could be argued that Plato lacks a sufficient account of difference in the sense of constitutive alteration or mutability (2247c-d). However, by focusing exclusively on this aspect of difference, Derrida himself denies difference in another sense, for he has no account of physicality, bodies, choice, circumstance, historical difference and of what might be "best" for a particular person at a particular time. Socrates' account of reverence for the good and the erotic gaze allows difference to develop, and his transgression of the inside-outside boundary does not mean that there is *no* distinction at all between the two, since such a situation would release univocal indifference. In fact, because of his account of the *violence* of *différance*, it is Derrida who is inclined toward indifference: "This process of substitution, which thus functions as a pure play of traces or supplements . . . which would be judged 'mad' since it can go on infinitely . . . this unleashed chain is . . . not lacking in violence."[32] In his ascription of violence to Plato, Derrida overlooks the fact that Plato's targets are precisely the *violent* methods of sophistry and that he moves beyond this in his account of *eros*. In this ascription, Derrida is actually obliged to edit misleadingly the mythological configuration

32. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

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of the Egyptian inventor of writing. As son, demi-god and vassal, Theuth "frequently participates in plots, perfidious intrigues, conspiracies to usurp the throne," and in his capacity as the moon-god, he "supplies the place of Ra, supplementing him and supplanting him in his absence and essential disappearance."[33] In each of Theuth's apparent roles (writing as supplement to speech, son as usurper of the king/father, moon as supplanter of the sun), Derrida insists on seeing exactly the same structure at work. He also sees the "usurpation" as violent and final. But this construal of language as fundamentally written is arbitrary and disallows the play of traces permitted by the series of embodied speakers. In any case, Theuth's offering of his inventions to the King was neither an act of usurpation nor entirely unsuccessful.[34] After all, Ammon was happy to receive some of the other inventions (274d). Moreover, it is not at all certain that Theuth's role in Egyptian mythology is that of a usurper. His central task in the legends of Horus and Osiris is as a peaceful mediator, erring in favor of legitimate sons (Horus). He is configured as a physician who heals the wounds of friends and enemies alike, and metes out justice and equilibrium. He also *protects* the King (as in the battle of Osiris and Set), beheading the King's enemies and cutting out their hearts, and defending the rights of legitimate offspring.[35] His chief structural associations in the *Book of the Dead* (in which he is configured as a dogheaded ape or baboon) are conciliation and peace. It is he, the linguistic mediator, "who ends the strife."[36] In addition, Derrida describes the usurpation of the sun by the moon as a *finality* undertaken in a mood of resentment and violence. As the crescent-topped Ibis, however, Theuth travels as the King's companion in the solar barque.[37] The supplementation of the sun by the moon is *positive,* not violent, and is, above all, a *cycle.* Furthermore, Theuth took the place of Ra not by violence but by consent. In the *Book of the Heavenly Cow,* Ra decrees "thou shalt be in my place as my *locum tenens.*"[38]

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 92-93.
34. Theuth himself was a "reckoner of gifts." See Boylan, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
35. *Ibid.,* pp. 58-59. See also M. A. Murray, *Ancient Egyptian Legends* (London: John Murray, 1913). See especially "The Book of Thoth," pp. 29-40, "Osiris," pp. 41-51, and "The Scorpions of Isis," pp. 52-55. Derrida is not wrong in his description of Theuth, but the rigidity of his structural configuration of Theuth's subordination to Ra, hostility toward legitimate filial relations and exclusive linkage to the written word needs loosening. Although Egyptian theology was by no means a self-consistent system, the epithets Derrida assigns to Theuth are neither exhaustive nor representative.
36. Boylan, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

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In these three examples, the interplays between son and father, writing and speech, moon and sun are not violent or incompatible spatial oppositions but enact a kind of asymmetrical reciprocity, or nonidentical repetition. Derrida's insistence on reading violence into these structures betrays an underlying metaphysical dependence on the dichotomies of inside and outside, presence and absence, which leads to an eradication of difference.

Despite his attempts to assimilate *différance* and the middle voice, this is carried over into Derrida's views on language. The middle voice is a grammatical category in ancient Indo-European languages. It was employed to denote the action of a verb which was neither active nor passive. There is some evidence to show that its use was not simply to cast an action as either reciprocal or reflexive but to express the mediation of the divine in human action. However in *Dissemination* the Derridean "middle" serves to confirm the duality of active and passive, and is characterized by a violent *conflict* between these two terms,[39] and not, as with Platonic *eros,* an outwitting of the duality. The curious autonomy Derrida assigns to language suggests the substitution of space for a differential relation of time. He describes the chain of significations as systematic and independent of the author's intentions: "The system (is) not primarily that of what someone *meant-to-say* [*un vouloir-dire*]. . . . These communications or corridors of meaning can sometimes be declared or clarified by Plato when he plays on them 'voluntarily,' a word we put in quotation marks because what it designates . . . is only a mode of 'submission' to the necessities of a given 'language' . . . then again, in other cases Plato can *not* see the links, can leave them in the shadow or break them up. And yet these links go on working of themselves."[40] Derrida's qualification of the autonomous subject, by removing all elements of choice, intention, desire and particularity from the speaker or writer, does not mean that *différance is* in the middle voice, for rather than mediating all human action by means of the divine, it merely forces the speaker into a situation of double passivity, both unable to choose language (rather, chosen *by* it) and *unaware* of this passivity. This false middle is echoed by the written text, for according to its violent protocol, writing acts on a speaker, erasing his *act* of speech and thereby erasing the speaker himself. Unlike inspiration from the Muses, there is no *knowing* invocation of the impersonal Derridean god:

39. Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 127. For a survey of uses of the middle voice, see Jan Gonda, "Reflections on the Indo-European Medium," Part 1, *Lingua* [IX] (March 1960), pp. 30-67, Part 2 (June 1960), pp. 175-193.

40. Derrida, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

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writing. Such writing acts automatically, without reference to place or time. It is a universalizer in a nihilistic mode. There is no subject. There are only objects, death(s).

There is a contradiction in all this. When Derrida insists on linking capital and the good in Plato's use of the word *tokos* (child), as summoning up, unwittingly, all the connotations of *tokous* (interest), he shows the autonomy of language, its systematic "corridors of meaning." This autonomy is Derrida's excuse for bringing into play the whole freight of the metaphor, regardless of context or particularity, as in the case of the deployment of *pharmakon* (drug). In what domain does this freight enjoy its play? Does it matter that neither author nor reader appreciate these corridors? Such a *différance* is impersonal and empty. By allowing metaphoricality such absolute reign, Derrida *obfuscates* the possibility of difference, which requires at least some literality. There has to be a limit, for difference *demands* that things are more alike to some things than to others. Certain things become linked by particularities of place, time, or even a kind of destiny. Everything is not equally indifferent. Derrida would concede that, in order for there to be any meaning at all, there has to be literality or particularity of a repetition. Yet his characterization of *différance* seems to undermine all such particularity. Thus his association of metaphor and literality leaves only indifference, for his metaphor likewise abdicates its power of yoking and his particularity abdicates all power of distinction.[41] He describes writing as fundamentally neutral, but this is to read its indifference as non-violent and pre-given. In truth, its autonomy reduces difference by means of a violence which rules out neutrality — an insidious violence which parades beneath indifference. To insist on neutrality is to take sides.

The Intimation of Doxology

According to Derrida's deconstruction of the *Phaedrus,* the sophists are wedded to language and mediation through rhetoric and writing, while Socrates stresses the realm of unmediated truth before or beyond language. Derrida uses this opposition to account for Plato's hostility to poetry, rhetoric, and (written) language in general. However, there are intimations in the dialogue of an alternative configuration, in which Socrates is not hostile to signs as such and construes the true language as *doxological,* that is to say, as ultimately concerned with praise of the divine. According to this view, he attacks sophistry *not* on the grounds of

41. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

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its linguistic mediation of truth, but because of its undoxological motivation. The central distinction is that of non-doxology and doxology, and not, as Derrida argues, between the absolute rule of language, on the one hand, and a supra-linguistic philosophical logos, on the other.

Plato's indictment of poetry in the *Republic* does not appeal to contemporary readers for whom the symbolic yield of art is seen as a revelation of truth which no techniques of reason or theory could ever equal.[42] For Plato, however, it is because the better the poetic rendering the further one is from the truth, that he exiles Homer and the Attic dramatists from his ideal state. In the *Phaedrus,* the poet and other imitative artists occupy a low position in the hierarchy of souls, only two levels above the sophists and three above tyrants (248e). The reason for the condemnation of Homer is the quarrelsome depiction of the gods and heroes as not conforming to the true *paideia,* and for his fearful depiction of Hades. Similarly, he exiles playwrights for not displaying an exemplary ethos. Within the extremity of his injunction, which was probably never meant as actual policy, Plato makes a serious ethical point. To the extent that the agonistic structures of sophistry have come to dominate and define ethics there is no longer a political ethos harmonious enough to tolerate the incorporation of Homer and the Attic dramatists. When Gadamer interprets Plato's indictment of mimetic arts, he argues that for Socrates the sophistic concern for superficial effects has complicated ethical principles to such an extent that they no longer appear valid in and for themselves and the goals they instill. Rather, they are upheld negatively, as strictures against mutual distrust. Such a fractured ethos cannot accommodate those works of art which do not unambiguously depict the true *paideia,* based on a positive, substantive construal of principle, since any inculcation of virtue they may contain can be readily perverted. Thus it is within the *sophistic* framework that poetic mimesis portrays human existence not according to its real dimensions but by the mere appearance as displayed to the *hoi polloi* from a distance. Its consequent delivery of a mere simulacrum means that it can only mislead the journey toward self-knowledge which seeks an undivided self, possible only on the basis of a vision of the good. Furthermore, in the sophistic *polis*, the merely negative upholding of ethical principles has eroded any sense of normative roles or appropriate blending of different roles, and this ensures that a person who imitates another person,

42. *Republic,* 377d-398b. See also Gadamer, "Plato and the Poets," in his *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutic Studies on Plato*, tr. by P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp.39-72.

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whether poetically or dramatically, is a *divided* self. If he does not ascribe to the harmonious ideal of *paideia* based on shared principles, the imitator is at once himself and *not* himself. He does not even coincide with the person whom he imitates, since his art of mimesis can only apprehend its model's mundane exterior. Whether by means of imitation or otherwise, forgetfulness-of-self is fulfilled in self-alienation, synonymous with the passions of the unruly horse whose behavior hinders all attempts to be reunited with the good (251 a) — just as if the soul is filled with forgetfulness, it grows heavy, loses his wings, and falls away from the good (248c). Thus contemporary mimesis is inimical to dialectic because it is defined by its confusion of roles. Indeed, it is considered most successful when there is as *little* difference between things as possible (261e). The mimetic art as practiced is also predicated on a necessary lack of commitment to steady goals. Accordingly, Socrates banishes all "mixed" men — all double and manifold men — from the ideal state, preferring instead those who perform just one task, the one best suited to their soul.[43]

For Plato, the only kind of poetry which avoids these criticisms is liturgical, in particular, hymns to the gods and songs in praise of what is good: "We can admit no poetry into our city save only hymns to the gods and praises of good men." [44]Although these forms engage in some mimetic representation, such as the depiction of gods as interlocutors, a song of praise or hymn does *not* involve self-division. In an act of doxological expression, the one who praises, the object of praise, and all those who share in its expression are supremely centered and non-ironic, for genuine avowal involves commitment to such a degree that nothing can be held back or veiled. Therefore, liturgy does not represent what is praise-worthy, but constitutes a whole way of life. To give praise to what is praise-worthy by definition involves participation in it, just as emulation (Socratic mimesis) of the transcendent good must perforce involve *methexis* in the good. In addition, emulation of the good involves steadfastness and commitment, for the vision of the good does not yield a codifiable rule of conduct, consisting in negative prohibitions, but rather forms the soul through an experience of transcendence. Likewise, Socratic politics does not institute a judicial system based on the weakness of the individual protected from other formal contracts, but depends on rising above an insistence on the self seen as discrete and

43. *Republic*, 397c-e, 398a-b.
44. *Ibid.*, 606-607a.

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defenseless. Dialectic is not a "skill" one employs from time to time, but a way of being: a constancy in the choice of life one leads, which ensures strong individuals and a polity based on their rule. The philosopher who exercises his memory properly is "always being initiated into perfect mysteries" (249c). In this regard, dialectics is primarily concerned with ethical and political practice (272a) in the state; it is not, as Derrida argues, a refusal of practicality. The blinding sun which befalls the cave dwellers in Plato's allegory teaches that one must learn to accommodate darkness as much as light. This applies to the life of the *polis*, for the good is the reason why there is a polity.[45]

The implication in Plato is that doxology as a lifestyle constitutes the supreme ethic. First, it is ontologically constitutive of the person who gives praise, for in that act he becomes fully central to himself at the very moment he is fully committed to the object of his praise. In the *Laws,* it is the divine gift of the liturgical cycle with all the concomitant sustenance which the deities bring to these festivals, which distinguishes human beings from the wild animals having no such gifts of order, rhythm or harmony.[46] Then, is doxology the gift of humanity itself, ordered through song and dance? The primal state of the philosopher-lover, which he remembers and strives to recoup, was indeed one of perpetual doxological expression: ". . . at that former time they saw beauty shining in brightness, when, with a blessed company . . . they saw the blessed sight and vision and were initiated into that which is rightly called the most blessed of mysteries, which are celebrated in a state of perfection, when we were without experience of the evils which awaited us . . ." (250b-c). Second, Plato's indictment of mimetic forms of art, taking base objects as their model, implies that liturgy is the highest form of language — what both expresses and performs a shared value of what is praiseworthy. It is precisely that positive Socratic mimesis which imitates the good and so is, by definition, doxological.[47] Similarly, Socrates' attack on mercantile sophism includes an attack on its perversion of language, with all the implications it entails for epistemology, ethics and ontology. The sophistic manipulation of language irrespective of truth is presented as a subversion of civic life, in opposition to Socrates' gift or sacrifice of language to the gods (*Kecharismena*, 273e) and insistence that the good discourse is one pleasing to the gods. His second *eros*-filled speech is offered as a liturgy — a linguistic gift to the gods

45. *Ibid.*, 503a, 517c-d.
46. *Laws*, tr. by A. E. Taylor, in *The Collected Dialogues*, 653d-654a.
47. *Republic*, 396c.

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— indistinguishable from dissemination of the doxological ethic: "Pardon, I pray, my former words and accept these words with favor" (257a). When the model of excellence is given a new efficacy, embodied in civic life, as described in the *Laws,* the city itself becomes the true drama, inhabited rather than represented, and the life of the philosopher-lover enacts the true poetry, for what he utters is harmonious with his whole mode of living. The Athenian explains that ". . . we are ourselves authors of a tragedy, and that the finest and best we know how to make. In fact, our whole polity has been constructed as a dramatization of a noble and perfect life; that is what *we* hold to be in the truth the most real of tragedies. Thus you are poets, and we also are poets in the same style . . . and that in the finest of all dramas one which indeed can be produced only by a code of true law."[48]

This drama of philosophical life is noble and serious. Yet it is expressed through celebration and singing, so that the city itself becomes a kind of music, embodying the two-fold sense of the word *nomos* as both law and song.[49] Derrida sees this festivity as a containment of *paidia* (play), which for him would ideally be instantiated as a kind of riot. He argues that, because for Socrates *paidia* is combined with ethics and politics, it is downgraded under the "innocent innocuous category of fun, or amusement." He offers two possibilities for Platonic play. Either it is nothing (*alogos* or *atopos*) or it is dialectical absence, for "(a)s soon as it comes into being and into language, play erases itself as such."[50] An alternative account of Platonic *paidia* would hold that play is not secondarily "brought into" political life, but is *constitutive* of the *polis*, thus dismantling the distinction between what is serious and what is playful. When asked by Phaedrus if he has leisure (*schole,* 227b) to accompany him to hear Lysias' speech, Socrates replies, "What, don't you believe that I consider hearing your conversation with Lysias 'a greater thing even than business,' as Pindar says?" (227b). Socrates' "leisure" falls outside the distinction between work and play; it is characterized by a perpetual philosophical readiness. While it is only by chance that Phaedrus is without sandals, Socrates is always barefooted, always at "leisure" (229a). Even though Phaedrus is at leisure (barefooted), he is still plying his trade. It is his business to seem at play, just as for the professional leisure is labor.[51] However, for the philosopher the emphasis is not on labor

48. *Laws*, 817b.
49. *Ibid.*, 664b-d and *Republic*, 401e.
50. Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
51. Ferrari, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

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and its production but on the fact that he is never more "at work" than when he is immersed in the everyday. The sophistic parody hinges on the confusion of dialectical *differentiation* and sophistic *dividedness*. Derrida mistakenly characterizes Socrates as dividing work from play: "On the one hand, the serious (*spoude*); on the other, the game (*paidia*) and the holiday (*hearte*)."[52] While Socrates does differentiate between good and bad play, as between the guided play of children in the *Laws* leading to the full *paideia*[53] and the wasteful "play" of the Adonians or the misuse of dialectic as for its own sake, he does not downgrade play by opposing it to the serious. Rather, he is anxious to show *paidia* to be central to *paideia,* for both are etymologically and structurally related.[54] According to this Socratic ennoblement of play as the true ethic, defined as doxology, music and dance, he describes the course of the day's discussion as a game (*pepaistho,* 278b), and when he comes to demonstrate how his speeches exemplify the dialectic, he explains that the whole discourse was all play (*paidiai pepaisthai,* 265d).

This subversion of ordinary proprieties is seen in the *Laws,* where human beings are depicted as God's toys and are not to be taken too seriously. In reality, only God is worth taking seriously (and what is divine in man). The human being is at best God's plaything, and the life we try to attain should consist in a form of play which alone is pleasing to God.[55] This *paidia* is not mere "fun," but is characterized by liturgical festivals, sacrifice, song, and dance.[56] The Athenian explains that it is a common error to think war is serious work to be done for the sake of peace, whereas in fact war is not the most serious thing as it involves neither true play nor true education.

Socrates' indictment of the poets is therefore *not* a condemnation of poetry as such, but rather of the separation of language from doxology, of art from liturgy, resulting in a sophistic "virtual reality" or realm of mere fiction which is manipulable, ironic, and uninhabited. The rise of sophistic structures means that allegiance to praiseworthy standards can no longer be pledged in a binding expression of glorification of the divine. Before the liturgical ethic can once again become a possibility,

52. Derrida, *op. cit*, p. 150.
53. *Laws*, 653d, 794a-797d, and *Republic*, 539b-c.
54. *Laws*, 653a. See Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, tr. by Gilbert Highet (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939), Vols. I and II.
55. *Laws*, 644d-645b, 803b-3, 804b.
56. *Laws*, 803d.

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these standards must be defended against the arguments and strategies of the new consciousness of dividedness inimical to the holistic structure of praise. Plato's dialogues occupy this intermediate, remedial stage, forming a discussion between opposing sides, in an attempt to lead the sophists into finding again the shared allegiance to the good.[57] The dialogues represent the dissemination of "theology" in a fragmented society, as leading therapeutically toward the doxological life, not only through their content but also their structure, for the dialogic form dislodges an empirical epistemology which seeks discrete maneuvers away from an embedded ethical way of life. The Platonic dialogue is therefore a kind of writing free from the dangers of writing, resisting singular attribution of author, genre, and medium. Is it Socrates or not? Is it a tractate or a drama? Is it a text or not? Its resistance to any foundation reveals it to possess the flexibility of orality, along with its form as a "literary" or theological rather than doxological prayer.

This theological interim of dialogue is crucial since it leads into doxology, which for Plato is the main human function and language's only possibility of restoration. There are significant implications of this for ontology, as is suggested in the opening words of the dialogue, "*(p)oi de kai pothen?*" which suggest a link between place and identity, citizenship and belonging, of what belongs and what does not, and thus provide a reappraisal of the city itself. This two-fold question, "where are you going and where do you come from?" is posed to Socrates' companion in the middle of his journey, the mid-point between destination and origin, reversing the chronological order by first asking for the end and then the origin of the journey. The second part of the question is taken up as the first by Phaedrus, indicating his own priority of lineage "(f)rom Lysias . . . the son of Cephalus." He thus traces his genealogical "place" of belonging to someone who does not "belong" at all, who is not autochthonous, for Lysias has metic status, which means he is a non-citizen resident alien whose security of place is purely contractual, supremely divided and veiled. As a metic, Lysias would have been obliged to register with a *prostastes,* a citizen who would have represented him in law courts and other public places. Although he would have had to pay a special *metoikion* tax, and was also liable to ordinary taxes, paid at a higher rate,

57. On the status of the genre of dialogue, see Planinc, *op. cit.,* p. 14; Gadamer, "Plato and the Poets," p. 66; Leo Strauss, "On Plato's Republic," in his *The City and Man* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964), pp. 50-138; and B. Darrell Jackson, "The Prayers of Socrates," in *Phronesis* 16 (1971), pp.14-37.

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he would have been debarred from the performance of *leitourgiai* (public acts of citizenship performed in honor of the gods).[58] In tracing his lineage to Lysias, Phaedrus chooses a very uncertain *topos*. Even in the metic terrain outside the city walls, marked by the presence of the altar of Boreas, whose myth centers on the very problem of belonging (for Boreas was a god from the North, a region held in antipathy by the Athenians because of its Thracian connections, who was rejected as an undesirable suitor to the autochthonous Oreithyia),[59] Lysias' voice is unable to speak for itself. Phaedrus must still act as his spokesman, and has gone beyond the city wall precisely to revel in the results of his voice, i.e., to revel in Lysias' absence. His voice is thus a text, portable and mobile, and his fixity (on papyrus: his speech and his metic contract) and dividedness (his hiddenness and inability to represent his own voice) are associated with the commercial way of life. It is no accident that Phaedrus is prone to treat others, besides Lysias, as texts, for this is his "way of life." Socrates hints at this when he describes the way in which he has been led randomly all over Attica (230e). Indeed, Phaedrus offers himself as no more than a text when he proposes to reproduce Lysias' speech as a mere rhapsody. This is confirmed when it turns out that he and Lysias are lover and beloved (236b, 275b, 279b), for in Socrates' palinode it is explained that lovers can be expected to seek those of similar character (252c-253c).

Despite Phaedrus' genealogical tracing to such a displaced figure as Lysias, it is he who emphasizes the strangeness and foreignness of Socrates, how *atopic* he seems, for it is as if he is at home everywhere. Socrates' close attention to the *topos* of the arbor makes him seem *atopotatos* (230c), the same word used to describe the insanity of the Delphic Pythia and the philosopher-lover. He announces that if he were to denude the Boreas myth of its mystery, he would not be *atopos* at all (229c), for the demythologizers (*hoi sophoi*) are intent on deciphering the *atopiai* (strange beings, 229e), of the chimaera and gorgons.[60] But Socrates speculates on his own likeness to Typhon, who was just such an oddity, which means that, for Phaedrus, Socrates is the oddest of men, behaving like a stranger even though he so seldom goes beyond the city walls (230c) and even though he is known to be autochthonous.

58. Leonard Whibley, ed., *A Companion to Greek Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), pp. 448, 495; and Louise Bruit Zaidman and Pauline Schmidt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*, tr. by Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 92-101.

59. Ferrari, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-13.

60. On *atopos*, see especially Ferrari's discussion, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

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Socrates seems to be in agreement with Phaedrus that he is wont to favor the city, when he says that "the country places and the trees won't teach me anything, and the people in the city do" (230d). Is this an example of Socratic irony? Later in the dialogue, when he glimpses the beauty of his surroundings and has described the nomadic life of the philosopher-lover, he seems to advance a new definition of the city in terms of what is within the soul and is lived out through steadfastness toward the good,[61] rather than what is divided by a wall from the corybantic countryside. By leaving the city walls behind, both literally and figuratively, Socrates has *not* become indifferent to place, in the manner of the Phaedran *mathesis*, which can operate anywhere, but rather sees places all the more intensely.

Lysias' discourses are described as *asteios* (227d), "of the city," refined, of outward appearances, urbane. This textual autochthony, paralleled by Lysias' contractual status, represents the most secure locus in Phaedrus' eyes, far more so than Socrates' curious and ecstatic position. But Socrates is proposing an altogether new ontology for, by reversing the chronology in his opening question, there is a suggestion that a person's identity is defined and performed not only by his position in a particular place but also by a kind of journeying, an "identity" which is always *in medias res*. At the point when Phaedrus announces Socrates' condition of displacement, the latter is superlatively *within* his place, for as a philosopher-lover his home is wherever the good leads him. Rather, it is Phaedrus who is the stranger, not only to the landscape but also to himself.

This radical doxological identity is beyond *both* mimetic realism and secular irony. The person who gives praise is not estranged, yet neither can he lay claim to a fixed or completed identity which would define a secular or contractual role. While the figure of Lysias, held securely in place by means of written contracts, is an identity supremely confused and under erasure, the Socratic subject finds itself in and through its liturgical role in the *polis*, and through inspiration from the beauty of his surroundings. This self-knowledge cannot be singularly attained, but represents a life's work and a way of being, as the subtitle of the *Phaedrus* indicates: "On the Beautiful, Ethical." Praise of the beautiful is the supreme ethic, the route to the transcendent good, which does not circumvent situatedness and contingency, and remains open to difference and multiplicity.

The Socratic *polis* is therefore not bound by physical walls, for walls represent the exclusion of possibilities. Rather, Socrates' boundaries are

61. *Republic*, 537d.

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more akin to philosophical conditions or psuchical principles. He carries this *polis* within him (253a), establishing its domain wherever he goes by uttering invocations, thanksgivings and petitions, treading the spiritual boundaries of his physical placement by noting the different aspects of the divine presence — Achelous, the nymphs, Pan, and the Muses. Socrates' refusal of the final temptation to flee the city offered to him in the *Crito* (and as he takes leave of his friends in the *Phaedo*), does not necessarily illustrate his fetishistic rootedness in the city — the traditional interpretation — but instead illustrates his dialectical steadfastness, his holding fast to what is good, and his sacral construal of the *polis*. It is rather the mercantile city which is driven to expel scapegoats in its urgent securing of identity through the perpetuation of the boundary between inside and outside, seen ultimately in the expulsion of the *atopic* Socrates, while Socrates' radicalization of that boundary through the psuchical *polis* shows an advance beyond the need for scapegoats.

Citizenship of the psuchical *polis* is achieved through steadfast commitment to the good, but this itself comes in answer to prayer, as a divine gift (245a-b, 279b-c). It is therefore neither statutorily assigned nor pregiven. In the Socratic city everyone is a metic, not secured by fact or contract, but by perpetual renewal of a particular mode of life, dialectic in character, sustained through acts of liturgy, thus ensuring that subjectivity remains open and a gift. This radicalization of boundaries as a kind of ethical goal, characterized by music and sacrifice, is far from the tranquil interiorities and suspicions of difference and language described by Derrida. Such monadic qualities are isolated by Socrates in his attack on sophism. They constitute an anticipation of the characteristics of immanentist modernity, and they subvert political life, not because of their reliance on language as such, but rather because of their separation of language *from itself* or from its ultimate character as an expression of liturgy.

Conclusion

Derrida misrepresents one source of the metaphysical tradition, i.e., Platonism. He is mistaken in his characterization of Socratic dialectical knowledge as "domination" and as predicated on the triumph of capital. On the contrary, Socrates critically identifies the link between *sophism* and both domination and capital. The Socratic preference for speech over writing is not a covertly necessary support for a metaphysics of presence but rather its explicit rejection. In presenting a new sophism, Derrida himself is exposed to all Socrates' criticisms. He is *himself* culpably "metaphysical"

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insofar as he celebrates sophistry and writing, just as his exaltation of the nihil is tantamount to an abasement before the perfect abstract and graspable object, within the context of a perverse but nonetheless perfected *mathesis.* It is as a *metaphysician,* after all, that Derrida upholds knowledge as writing, domination and capital, for his exaltation of absence and postponement turns out to be nothing but the inevitably nihilistic conclusion of a rationalism indifferent to the specificities of human place, time and desire. The perfectly present *is* that which will never arrive, as he himself dialectically affirms.[62] Thus he perfects, and does not refute, the Cartesian abstraction from embodiment. Not only does it seem that the Derridean and entire postmodern assumption of a seamless line of development of a culpable "metaphysics" from Plato to Descartes is false, Derrida *also remains within* a post-Cartesian set of assumptions whose ancestry lies in sophistry and not in the Platonic dialectics.

If this conclusion is correct, the entire postmodern historical and philosophical perspective is drastically called into question. It is no longer a matter of a Western logocentrism, fixated on presence, and a domineering gaze secured by myths of transcendence. Rather, it is *just those very myths* which first radically challenged the beginnings of a technocratic, manipulative, dogmatically rationalist, anti-erotic, anti-corporeal and homogenizing society undergirded by secularity and pure immanence in ancient Athens. Instead of celebrating a final escape from a malign Western past, it is a matter of mourning the departure from what was once one of the most central elements in Western tradition: philosophy itself, in its revisionist Socratic variant. Finally, the modern/postmodern debate is empty shadow-boxing since nihilism is nothing but the most extreme expression of a humanist rationalism. It should therefore cease to surprise that postmodernism offers no new and critical politics beyond the *impasse* of commercialism into which modernity has led. Instead, the Socratic notion that only a doxological *polis* and the acknowledgment of transcendence allows a break with the sway of capital and linguistic debasement should be seriously considered.

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62. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, tr. by David Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

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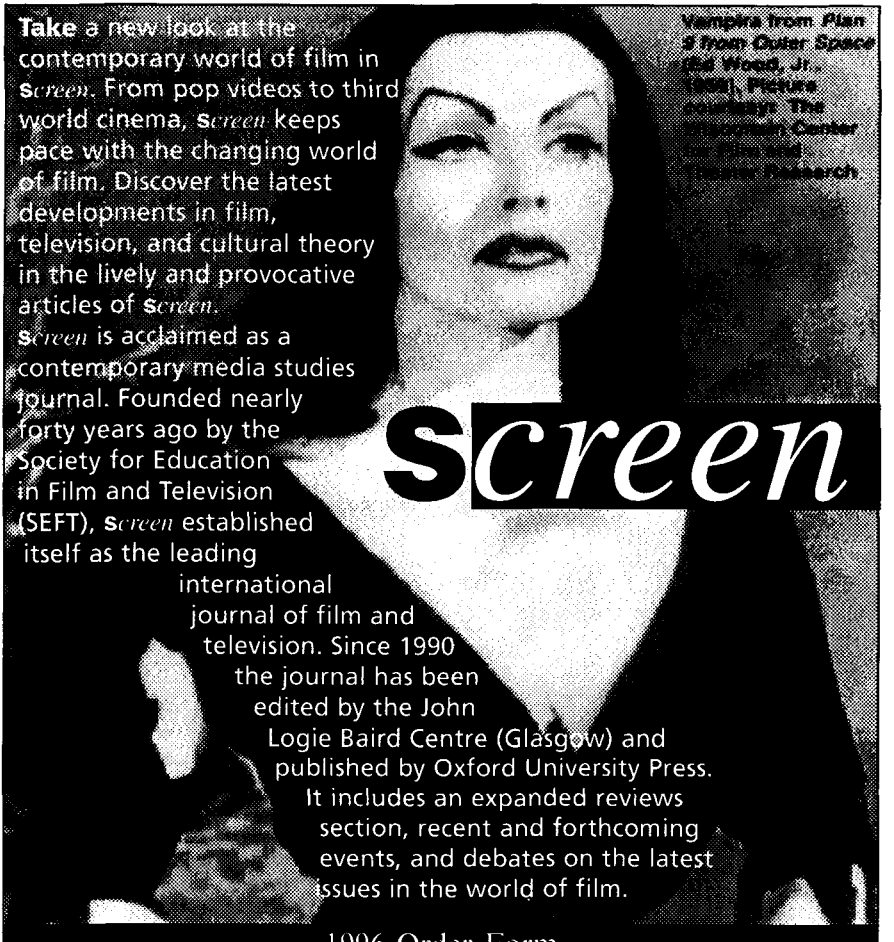

Vampira from *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (Ed Wood, Jr., 1958). Picture courtesy The Kobal Collection

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Physics vs. Social Text: *Anatomy of a Hoax*

Babette E. Babich

Scientists defend "impersonal, objective truth" against the postmodern claim that there is no truth, only interpretations. The hoax on cultural studies orchestrated by a physicist, Alan Sokal, has highlighted this perspective. Sokal's disclosure of the hoax and subsequent polemics has ripped through the complacency of academic disciplines, exposing the fragility of academic integrity and raising questions concerning the function of peer review. Sokal submitted a bogus article for the May 1996 issue of *Social Text* devoted to "Science Wars."[1] On Sokal's own account, the *Social Text* essay feigned an earnest reflection on the political and philosophical implications of recent physics research for cultural criticism.[2]

As with all hoaxes, Sokal's was neither expected nor, like its Piltdown precedent, immediately recognized. If Sokal had acted solely out of malice, like the curator of the British Museum who took the details of his secret to his grave leaving a trunk filled with evidence, he would have waited to see if his hoax would shock or surprise. Instead, he assured himself a modicum of attention by immediately orchestrating a confession. A number of attacks

1. Alan Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," in *Social Text* 46/47, Vol. 14, Nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 1996), pp. 217-252. Over half of the essay consists of footnotes and references (pp. 231-52).

2. Alan Sokal, "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies," in *Lingua Franca*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (May/June 1996), pp. 62-64. The previous issue of this journal featured an extensive article recounting the "experiments" of literary scholars with "the new sciences of chaos and complexity." Steven Johnson's title (and accompanying gloss) ran as follows: "Strange Attraction: The new sciences of chaos and complexity are turning up everywhere even in English departments. And some critics are overjoyed. But is literature too complex for the complexity theorists?" in *Lingua Franca*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (March/April 1996), pp. 42-50.

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have followed. Most of them, such as Steven Weinberg's, are written from the viewpoint of the natural scientist, i.e., against the duped social scientists and, most of all, against the rhetorical excesses of postmodern theory. Thus Weinberg found the matter largely amusing and, along with other contributors, he ridiculed the "academic babble" typical of the advocates of postmodernism.[3] According to Weinberg, as a physicist Sokal is incapable of writing "unclearly" — even when he tries to do so. Weinberg thus focussed his attack on Jacques Derrida. So did Peter Berkowitz, who identified "academic babble" as the key characteristic of postmodern critique and argued that the ideological conceit of postmodern critique is self-defeating.[4]

For Weinberg, physics writing is paradigmatic of clear and distinct academic prose. With his unblinking bad-faith plea for the clarity of physics textbooks, Weinberg addresses the issue of "complex" prose style as inherently confused: "Derrida and other postmodernists *do not seem* to be saying anything that requires a technical language, and they *do not seem* to be trying very hard to be clear."[5] Weinberg does not actually quote physics prose, as he quotes Derrida. He cannot do so because, as he confesses, physics *requires* technical terminology while philosophy does not "seem" to. The part of the dupe, i.e., the part of the *Social Text* editors, has been less well articulated. Initially, their defenses took an overly legalistic tack against the very idea of Sokal's hoax as an instance of "science fraud." Thus a number of defenses follow Stanley Fish's unreflective and less than tactical argument.[6] On the other hand, Bruce V. Lewenstein indicated the polemic's possible public policy damage, while attempting to review the debate concerning science in society.[7] Dorothy Nelkin's subsequent essay[8] was more

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3. Steven Weinberg, "Sokal's Hoax," in *The New York Review of Books* (August 8, 1996), p. 11-15.

4. In a thinly veiled reference to Nietzsche, Berkowitz wrote that "the incredulous postmodernist knows that what was once believed to be true is absurd." See Peter Berkowitz, "Postmodernism Exposed: Science Fiction," in *The New Republic* (July 1, 1996), p. 16.

5. Weinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

6. See *Lingua Franca*, Vol. 6, No. 5 (July/August 1996), pp. 55-64 for a round of letters from assorted academics, including a four-page reply by Bruce Robbins and Andrew Ross, editors of the original *Social Text* issue. See also Liz McMillen's review of the hoax and its aftermath in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 28, 1996), p. A-13.

7. Bruce V. Lewenstein, "Science and Society: The Continuing Value of Reasoned Debate," in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 21, 1996), p. B-1-B-2.

8. Dorothy Nelkin, "What Are the Science Wars Really About?" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (July 26, 1996), p. A52. See also Charles E. Rosenberg's "The Silicone Papers," a review of Marcia Angell's *Science on Trial*, in *The New York Times Book Review* (July 14, 1996), p. 9-10). Where Angell blames society's enthusiasm for litigation as the main culprit in the breast implant controversy, Rosenberg points both to the "anti-science" movement and to the "problem of junk science," echoing many of Nelkin's points.

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to the point and cut to the core of the debate — to the competitive clash between disciplines for diminishing federal funds, i.e., the desperation of scientists seeking scapegoats for the now chilly economic waters.

Strangely, postmodern defenses have assumed the accuracy of all charges against them, taking credit for the perceived discrediting of science in a way reminiscent of the macabre scrabble for publicity among extremist groups in the wake of a terrorist attack. Most critical reviews, however, concur with Weinberg and Sokal: eliminate obfuscation and all will be clear. Thus even Ellen Willis was able to take a highly moral and didactic tone condemning the fussiness of "pomo lingo" and the "hermetic verbiage . . . covering up muddled thinking."[9] If only things were said simply, there would be truth. But is truth simple? The critique of postmodern "academic babble" takes as its point of departure an adage typical of analytic philosophers — the overwhelming majority of English-speaking academic philosophers — that whatever may not be said clearly ought not be said at all. Within such a context, one may refute an opponent by charging that what is being said cannot be understood.[10] Thus Weinberg, who buys into this Cartesian simple-mindedness, claims never to confuse "obscurity with profundity." But what can be stated clearly is never "profound," if only as a consequence of depth itself. The rigid belief that only clear prose can be true has more to do with current sound-bite tailored culture than with truth itself.

Here, recalling Adorno's attack on the verbiage of a past generation in the *Jargon of Authenticity*, when Adorno himself was a paragon of impossibly esoteric style, the question of the virtues of the clear and distinct, and the related issue of the intrinsic muddle-headedeness of what appears muddle-headed from the viewpoint of someone outside a given tradition, is at best unclear.[11] But if the demand for clarity is the saving virtue of "reasoned debate," then, as Martin Heidegger put it, reason

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9. Ellen Willis, "My Sokaled Life: Or, Revenge of the Nerds," in *The Village Voice* (June 25, 1996), p. 20-21.

10. George Levine, seemingly unaware of this tradition, mistakes such a standard factional academic strategy for the voice of common sense. See his contribution to "Sokal's Hoax: An Exchange," in *The New York Review of Books* (Oct. 3, 1996), p. 54.

11. Neither Weinberg nor Berkowitz name thinkers such as Heidegger or Nietzsche. Instead, Derrida and certain critical readings of literature are categorized as "leftist," "postmodernist" and ultimately "irrationalist" because perceived as anti-science. In the end, such cavilling attacks do not seem inspired by unusual or perplexing terms such as "hermeneutics" (which physicists pretend not to understand, eschewing dictionaries and other reference books), or "deconstructionism" or the very contradictory idea of postmodernity.

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might well be "the most stiff-necked adversary of thought."[12] Beyond the scurillity of presuming that perspectives different from one's own should express anything other than "babble" when read without an appropriate interpretive perspective, the charge of a putatively anti-science, irrationalist movement antedates the Sokal affair.[13] A recent book bluntly argues that science as the bulwark of human progress must be protected from policy makers worried about the escalating costs of scientific research.[14] Allegedly, a grand and noble enterprises such as science is and has been under attack from feminists, deconstructionists, postmodern critics. etc.[15] The key culprit is the mind-fuzzing influence of "obscurantism." Thus here too, as in the Sokal debate, responsibility for an increasingly negative public perception of science and the recent decline in federal funding for scientific research (i.e., the "war" against science) is traced to the subversive effects of irrationalism in the academy. Nip the "bad" writing of deconstructionists and postmodernists in the bud and funding levels for supercolliders will be up in no time. No more social constructivist talk: bring reality back. Such is the astonishingly passionate message for logicians, mathematicians, physicists, science writers and especially philosophers of science — people unaccustomed to such desperate pleas.

It is difficult to evaluate the claim that only irrational forces *could* be behind the decline in federal support, where the *arcana* of the national economy have managed to elude solution from conservative, liberal or any other political perspective. As John Ziman notes, with the end of the cold war the institution of science has changed, while the disinterested ethos of the university researcher has not kept pace: science must give up the rhetoric of disinterest as a concession to the increasing limits on science funding and the social forces that value applicability over pure research. Thus Paul K. Feyerabend could enjoin "*citizens' initiatives*

12. Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead'," (1943), in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, tr. by William Lowitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 112.

13. This is well documented in Paul Gross and Norman Levitt, *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). The same tradition was exemplified at the 1995 June meeting of the New York Academy of Science devoted to "The Flight From Reason."

14. Norman Hackerman and Kenneth Ashworth, *Conversations on the Use of Science and Technology* (Denton, TX: North Texas University Press, 1996).

15. The endangered sciences are primarily physics, but also chemistry and, to a lesser degree, biology. In addition to its enemies on the Left, science also has to face the religious fundamentalists' opposition to evolutionary theory on the Right.

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instead of epistemology."[16] While it is unclear whether the new cost-cutting is a result of "citizens initiatives," for Ziman it is now a fact of funding life that such a constraint on scientific research has taken hold wherever "governments are trying to get better value for their money."[17]

This is both economics and politics. As Feyerabend observed over a decade ago: "the sciences of today are business enterprises run on business principles. Research in large institutes is not guided by Truth and Reason but by the most rewarding fashion, and the great minds of today increasingly turn to where the money is — which means military matters."[18] After the demise of the cold war, the *Social Text* editors note the remaining "gulf of power between experts and lay voices and the currently shifting relationship between science and the corporate-military state."[19] Thus, the current science wars may represent displacement tactics in the wake of the cold war rather than the ascendancy of the "democratic relativism" Feyerabend describes as the heritage of Periclean Athens.[20] Underlining divisive over communitarian impulses, Levine charges Gross and Levitt (and Sokal) with overlooking the obvious: "the real threat to the supercollider or science funding isn't coming from Andrew Ross or Stanley Aronowitz. The threat comes from a culture profoundly anti-intellectual and now overwelmingly pre-occupied with taxes and money."[21]

What is the difference between such a "profoundly anti-intellectual" culture and an anti-science culture? If no contributor to the recent science wars debate has come forward in defense of "muddled thinking" or "bad" writing, one is even less likely to find a real-life example of the reputed anti-science movement in today's honest-to-god, robust-as-ever cyber-techno cargo culture. As a cultural phenomenon, the so-called anti-science movement may be regarded as an anxious fantasy, conjured from the

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16. Paul K. Feyerabend, *Three Dialogues on Knowledge* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford and Cambridge, 1991), p. 120.

17. John Ziman, "Is Science Losing Its Objectivity," in *Nature,* Vol. 382 (August 29, 1996), p. 752.

18. Paul K. Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason* (Verso: London, 1987), p. 102.

19. Bruce Robbins and Andrew Ross, contribution to "Mystery Science Theater," in *Lingua Franca*, Vol. 6, No. 5 (July/August, 1996), p. 57.

20. Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-62.

21. Levine, *op. cit.*, p. 64. If Levine understates his case here, he sharpens it a bit in his reply to Weinberg, "The new counter-aggression of scientists hostile to 'postmodernism' is surely the consequence of an economic pinch hurting them as well as humanists and social scientists." See Levine, "Sokal's Hoax: An Exchange," in *The New York Review of Books* (October 3, 1996), p. 54. It is difficult to analyze the full consequences of recent cuts in military spending for science research

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fears of scientists and their social advocates. Science is so unopposed that its public lionization includes even the religious Right, which does not reject the value of science but lobbies for what it calls creation "science." It simply wishes to appropriate its aura. Nor do public interest groups agitate for *less research* to solve social problems such as HIV or cancer or broken family structure. Social opinion calls for more and better, i.e., *more scientific* and *more sophisticated* research focussed on these and other problems. As indicated by its consumption of books, video or cable television programs, the public goes so far as to turn to scientists for spiritual values, regarding Steven Hawking as a moral as well as an intellectual hero, while Albert Einstein remains the most celebrated *genius* of all time, head and shoulders above any poet, artist, or statesman.

If the perception of an anti-science anxiety is groundless, this is not to suggest that this anxiety is unreal. In inventing the kind of thinking that eventually made science possible, Plato indicted unregulated mythical beliefs, poetry and particular musical modes as the greatest dangers to society. In the same tradition, modern science pronounced the church the embodiment of irrationality and, borrowing the notion of martyrdom from it, wrote its own history as one of persecution. The rhetoric of persecution and the conviction of the threat posed by religious hostility persists even where scientific sensibility is the only one left.

This does not mean there has been *no* change in the public perception of science. The postwar enthusiasm for the latest scientific developments has diminished, yet this should not be interpreted as a sign of an increasing *distrust* of science but merely as *disappointment* and *impatience* with the "slow" pace of scientific progress. From the outset, the public value of science was never the production of pure knowledge. The real cultural value of science is inseparable from its technological embodiment. Because of this practical social promise, science enjoyed generous public and private support. Seemingly unlimited in scope, during this century the culture of scientific research has grown exponentially, attracting a large body of practitioners, institutions and support industries. Nor is it an accident that a key part of the preparation for a career in science is increasingly devoted to acquiring mastery of the skills necessary to secure support for research. The rhetorical ideal of pure science has long been compromised in practice by politically fundable areas of profitable research.

Nurtured in the mythical crucible of unlimited scientific promise, like pasteurization, it was only a matter of time before the benefits of scientific progress could be expected in practical solutions to the "war" on cancer and

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poverty, the "battle" against pathogens, perhaps even in potions effective in the "struggle" against old age and death itself. Hearing the optimistic claims of the "atomic age" as the rhetoric of the high modernism of test-tube science, the same public subscribed both to the promise and the ideal. Of course, battles and struggles against time-honored foes were well chosen. Such metaphors are historically recurrent in a variety of intellectual schemes, but — and this is the key to understanding the growing public disappointment with science — the promise of ever accelerating scientific "breakthroughs" could not be kept. This century has not been patient when it came to scientific and technological developments. According to science's promises, what stood in the way of the development of every conceivable scientific good was only access to "sufficient" time and resources. In the wake of the atomic age, fully ensconced in the web-dreams of the Internet, it is hardly unreasonable to expect, as the public has for decades, that the "scientific future" should have arrived *already*.

The fact that this has not happened paves the way to what, for lack of better word, has been called "postmodernism." The failure of modernity to develop into a braver new future, free of disease, old age and every conceivable social ill, is the very disappointment modernity is loathe to accept. A denial of its own disappointment yields neither nostalgia nor reverse modernism. *Postponed* under the guise of an ironic displacement, modernism has found a way to continue its original optimistic project. It is because the changed public perception is the result of such a disappointment that the public remains ever eager to see science fulfill its promise.

Chaos Theory and Metaphoricality

The modern *and* postmodern conviction that scientific rationality represents the supreme intellectual perspective is intrinsically pernicious. To return to the Sokal hoax, it was not the *Social Text* editors' anti-science sentiment but, rather, a pro-science prejudice which led them to invite a physicist to submit an overtly philosophical commentary. It was this same pro-science or, better, pro-physics prejudice which persisted after the fact in the fantasy that all the scandalous repercussions could have been avoided had other scientists only been invited to review Sokal's essay. Allegedly, the remedy should have been more consultation and peer review: recourse to the ultimate authority of natural or real scientists.

The problem here has to do with translation between different conceptual schemes. In addition to a flat-footed theoretical grasp of linguistic functions, what inspired Sokal to rig his hoax was his inability — a result

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of the narrow technical specialization of university-trained scientists — to understand the significance of social science's investigation of the social context of science. As some humanists are said to be weak in math and science, some physicists are deficient in the complexities of rhetoric. On the postmodern side, and this is more damning, the cultural critics' enthusiasm for the literary value of information science, chaos theory, indeterminacy, etc. leads them to be seduced by the associative possibilities of metaphors employed by theorists seeking to express scientific and mathematical relations. Against Weinberg's claim that humanists had better wait until all theories are certified as "final" by science before drawing any cultural consequences, Levine argues that "it is difficult *not* to see Bohr's argument as loaded with telling cultural implications."[22] But this is exactly the problem for Weinberg, who exposes the solecism of celebrating "non-linearity" as if it were simply non-narrativity. In physics, pluralism, fluidity, unified field theory, chaos and complexity theory — even indeterminacy — are plain theoretical constructs, which does not mean they are not muddled when quoted out of context. Against Weinberg, even within physics such terms are pre-muddled in the way any flattened usage of a word which refuses the wider resonance of a metaphor is inevitably muddled. In physics this works because the metaphor is chosen by simple associative caprice or subjective metonomy. A sense of a word's history or the finesse of the poet has nothing to do with the selection. Thus, a quark's charm has nothing to do with Brillat-Savarin, Orpheus or Lucretius. This only means that physics is not literary studies. Blissfully untroubled by literary, cultural and mythical associations, this is the jargon of what one makes one's own: proprietary stipulation. Seduced nonetheless by the literary resonances of these metaphors, critics of science can easily find meanings irrelevant to the use of the same metaphor within science. Yet, and here one must agree with the physicists, they are not there. In a word: chaos theory as such neither assumes nor entails reference to Hesiod's marriage of chaos and broad-breasted earth nor does it invite parallels with Joycean chassis.

This is being overly generous to postmodern theorists. Much more plays in this projection of the wild and wooly, playful and free science. Behind modernism's and postmodernism's persistent optimism in the possibilities of science "*über Alles*" lies wishful thinking, and behind such magical thought, the lurking seductions of indolence. As postmodernists such as

22. Levine, *op. cit.*

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Jean-François Lyotard and others have pointed out, the paradoxical "openness" to radical questions within traditionally staid and closed scientific disciplines, such as physics, depends on an optimism betraying the similarity of the pro-science convictions of post-modernism and modernism.

Both the misunderstanding of scientific terminology and the paradoxical dependency on science's legitimating value within postmodern culture are a result of the continuing and unchallenged position of science as arbiter of truth and value — a status akin to that of religion in pre-modern societies. The binary thinking that asserts the authority of one world view (science) over another (everything else) is itself quasi-religious — especially in the case of Weinberg, who reduces all science to physics so that, in the words of two Yale scholars, the particle physicist "stands ready in his role as pre-Kantian shaman to declare tabu all that which falls outside his narrow definitions."[23] Against this "immaculate conception of science" one might propose Nietzschean perspectivism or Feyerabendian relativism. Because postmodern critique has little to do with either perspectivism or democratic relativism, it remains a form of scientism. Thus, the ultimate, legitimating status of high church science goes unchallenged by postmodernist thought — as was handily corroborated by the *Social Text* editors.[24]

The task of challenging the so-called "new" science (replete with chaos theory, indeterminism and what not) as well as the good "old" science (garden variety explanation, prediction and control) must be left to critical philosophy because these questions are *philosophical*, not scientific. Philosophical questions are not known entities. To understand the essence of reason or truth one has to pit reason against reason and question the ideal of truth. Such reflexivity would characterize a thoughtful philosophy of science. Even if it does not exist yet, such a philosophy of science must be prepared to raise the question of the values of rationality and truth. When it does, not only such philosophers as Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Nietzsche but also Husserl, Adorno, and Feyerabend, which now are not part of traditional philosophy of science, would enter the picture. One will have to ask, with Nietzsche, *why* science and reason are valuable, what exactly is it that requires truth?[25] Yet there seems little need to invoke the names of such

23. Michael Holquist and Robert Shulman, letter "Sokal's Hoax: An Exchange," in New York Review of Books (October 3, 1996), p. 54.

24. For a reading of the subversive power of science as an agency of patriarchy and violence and thus as inimical to leftist ideals, see Geraldine Finn, *Why Althusser Killed his Wife* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996).

25. Friedrich Nietzsche, "What Really is it in un that wants 'the truth'?" tr. by R. J. Hollingdale, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Middlesex: Harkmondsworth, 1972), p. 15.

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philosophers in this context. Allegedly, today's epistemologists and philosophers of science, even where they continue to reject the contributions of both Kuhn and Feyerbend and never mention Nietzsche, have "already" come to better and more sober insights in their own waters. The problems of science (as well as of Enlightenment rationality) are patent. From a modern perspective, where there are plain problems there are equally plain solutions, proffered and arbitrated from within the tradition itself.[26]

This critical claim asserting the givenness of a "new" science, or of a "new philosophy of science," reflects the changes in philosophy as a whole. In these postmodern, post-cold war, post-pluralist times, analytic philosophy is obviously no longer merely analytic philosophy and it cannot be distinguished from continental philosophy. Philosophy is post-philosophy, modified, modest and, above all, *new and improved.* A post-modern vision has taken over. Why bother to call for revolution *after* the revolution has succeeded? Recent accounts of the philosophy of science, both within and without, regard science itself — especially physics — as its own self-determined philosophy, thus raising questions concerning the philosophy of science and science itself, repeating the postmodern adulation of a strange, new science. Reprising Galileo, this is the spirit of the "new" science. This means only that, rather than requiring alternative approaches to science and scientific culture, science has become an alternative to itself. But without anything so awkward as revolution and the necessary transition period that moves from one paradigm to a newer one through the evolutionary dying off of the most creative adherents of the old paradigm, critique is declared unnecessary. Allegedly, current philosophy of science incorporates all this and more. Thus critical review is co-opted in advance, rendered sterile, moot and obscurantist. The solution to science is still more science. All that is needed is internal and expert peer-review. Leave science to the scientists. But never, it goes without saying, threaten funding for science.

This very routine operation of capitalist-cum-marketing ideology is the way co-option works. If such a conversion of opposition is subtle, it remains strikingly effective. Speaking of the dialectical nuances of the biological-historical-social oppression of women, Simone de Beauvoir invoked

26. As the hallmark of progressive, modern scientific thinking, resolutions are always available. In the context of Nietzsche, in the struggle against the reign of morals and the ascetic ideal, after two long essays in search of a critical ally or advocate to make common cause with him, he observes that he ought not have to look far for a champion "they tell me it is not lacking." Characteristically, the purported hero is science itself. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, tr. by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1968) III:23, p. 146.

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the very *complicity* of the oppressed to describe the co-optive process.[27] Thus co-option and complicity as the dialectic engine of *ressentiment* effects the preservation of the same, the old, in the guise of the new: the weak represented as strong, "new" but no longer oppressed femininity. The process of co-option, complicity, *ressentiment* is not fundamentally subversive. Ideals are not converted against themselves, they are simply, in Orwellspeak, declared fulfilled. This is a routine ideological maneuver for preserving the *status quo*. To recognize a challenge, conceding its claim as viable, reasonable, etc., defeats the challenge. This means that nothing needs to be changed and challenges only work in an agonistic culture.

Historically, conflict has had a similar fate in traditional philosophy and in this the tradition has ways of co-opting the eristic not ironically but ingenuously. The present predicament is not a post-revolutionary one, but that of a co-opted revolution. Thus, Anglo-American philosophy remains as dominated by the same analytic perspectives as ever, but now offered (in analytic style) by analytically trained and analytically read philosophers hitting all the analytic high notes in a popular motet riffed with the low bass of continental names (Foucault, Habermas, even Heidegger, et al.). In this context, it is not necessary to go all the way to a continental viewpoint, where, as Richard Rorty tirelessly repeats, John Dewey's American pragmatism embodies what is best in Derrida, Foucault, Heidegger *and* Nietzsche — *all* of French and German thought — all rolled into one really readable philosopher.

In the philosophy of science, this same sophisticated appreciation of the so-called continental turn translates into the contention that there is nothing ultimately "alternative" about continental approaches. Mainline philosophy of science has, in its own way, managed to overcome its own limitations, inventing in an elegant instance of convergent evolution the wheel not again but independently: self-sufficiently. This self-sufficiency means it has no need to engage those who have spent years or even a lifetime in formerly alternative traditions. All say the same thing. To borrow Rorty's thunder again: Heidegger? Dewey? What is the difference? Thus, as Putnam has suggested, Wittgenstein, Austin *and* Husserl all ultimately voice the same conclusion.[28] Ergo, there is no need for anything like the representation of

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27. See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, tr. by H. M. Parshley (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 720.

28. Hilary Putnam, "Is the Causal Structure of the Physical Itself Something Physical," in Peter French, T. Uehling, Jr., H. Wettstein, eds., *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. IX (1984) "Causation and Causal Theories," p. 10.

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an alternative approach to the philosophy of science, especially one which would require a rethinking of its role — a rethinking of philosophy, science, technology, etc. A *new philosophy of science* is *already* underway.

For Feyerabend, a philosophy of science "that devises standards and structural elements of all scientific activities and authorizes them by reference to some rationality-theory may impress outsiders — but it is much too crude an instrument for the people on the spot, that is for scientists facing some concrete research problem."[29] There is no "new" philosophy of science because the nature of science and the nature of reason (against Weinberg) are not yet recognized. The fantasy of objectivity keeps thinkers from recognizing that "scientific theories are human creations and that science is one tradition among many."[30]

The Claims of Scientific Rationality

The banal answer to the question concerning why *Social Text* published Sokal has to do with the prestige assured by the hierarchy which ranks natural scientists above social scientists and other academics.[31] Thus, if the *Social Text* issue on "Science Wars" can be seen as a response to the challenge of the anti-hermeneuticist convictions of science apologists, Sokal is a kind of academic mole. An academic mole is what is needed in such an imaginary "cold war" between science and "deconstructionists" or "post-modernists" or "the" Left, because there is no direct alternative to the function of a mole. Any kind of "reasoned" debate would have to be conducted on the ground of science itself, presuming the values of science. It is *irrational* to question the value of rationality.

There is no reasoned flight from reason; there is no logical critique of the conditions or coherence of logic. There is and can be no scientific critique of science. It is for this self-referential reason (which corresponds to the force of the claim of Enlightenment reason itself) that the critical undertakings conceived by the various disciplinary ventures that have raised questions about and even against science can only be seen as raising anti-science or irrationalist issues. Because of this reflexive circle, the task of a critical reflection on science, rationality and logic is not the first or proper task of "cultural criticism." Nor, to the extent that sociology and

29. Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason*, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
31. Sokal's essay was accepted for publication because what he claimed to say, *as a natural scientist*, about the relation between social science research and recent "revelations" of natural science research fit well with *Social Text*'s editorial convictions on the subject.

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anthropology are themselves part and parcel of the scientific enterprise, can such a task be undertaken on the basis of sociological or anthropological studies of science. No one can jump over his own shadow. A reflective inquiry into the nature of science requires the resources not of cultural critique nor of social science but of extra-analytic philosophy. It is only with the resources of philosophy that such questions can be posed.

This does not mean that the charge of irrationality will not be made. It is no accident that philosophers who have made it their business to question truth have been refused the title of rational philosophy and, branded as irrationalist, relegated to the romantic spheres of poetry and mysticism. Traditional and analytic philosophy has long defined itself as the discipline of the rational or, more explicitly, the science of science. Yet, prior to this definition, the philosopher, the lover of truth is and remains a seeker — which is also to say a radical questioner, asking after origins.

Feyerabend was just such a radical combination of many things: a physicist by training, he was also a thinker, a skeptic and cultural critic of both philosophy of science and of science itself. More than modestly, although contentiously, Feyerabend called for a return not to the wholeness of some impossibly bygone era or distant cultural world but rather to the very modern guild origins of Western economic culture and withal science. Invoking the model of "fifteenth century Renaissance artists," Feyerabend could propose that the only thing needed "to restore the efficiency, the modesty and, above all, the humanity of the practitioners of a craft is the admission that scientists are citizens *even inside the domain of their expertise* and should therefore be prepared to accept the guidance and supervision of their fellow citizens."[32] Denying its craft and citizen status, science's claim to self-legislation is a tacit bid for social dominion. The modesty of craft refused by the self-assertion of science over and against so-called "policy makers" is perplexing because, of all academic endeavors, science remains the one intellectual activity beyond the arts which so manifestly reaps its best advances in the practical, banausic and what could be called technical or even engineering tradition. As Feyerabend knew all too well, contemporary science is practiced as a craft, modelled in the traditional sense, including apprenticeship, teamwork, and the recognition of mastery. He reserved a claim for the importance of "*freedom from*" the sciences while remaining throughout his life a great advocate (this was the point of his program against method) of what he called

32. Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason*, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-42.

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"*freedom for*" the sciences. Such a complex view limits the desire of science to regulate its own progress in the wake of the Sokal debacle. Against the current science campaign to win untrammeled access to the bulk of public support for its research programs, Feyerabend never ceased to emphasize that "the conceited view that some human beings, having the divine gift of creativity, can rebuild Creation to fit their fantasies has not only led to tremendous social, ecological, and personal problems, it has very doubtful credentials, scientifically speaking."[33]

This is not the postmodern ideal of pluralism. Instead, highlighting the technical function of the scientific focus, what is key for Feyerabend is that it betrays its very interest, the traditional working of modern science: "if we pay attention to some facts — the general features selected by science — we can disregard others."[34] In another formulation, the world itself, which he describes in concrete terms as the regionalism of apparent reality, remains unmasterable with the resources of science as well as of philosophy. Instead of the success of grand theory, there are "modest successes in narrow domains and grandiloquent promises dressed up as results already achieved."[35] Here Feyerabend describes the exact sphere of modern, technical scientific success. To say that science does not catch the whole of things only leaves room for history, culture, society and especially for science. Anything else is not only hubris, as heclams, but dubious in the most ordinary scientific sense.

Against Postmodern Sophistication in Science and Technology

Why do postmodernists think science is on their side? Because, like everyone else in Western, i.e., global society, they are persuaded that science is liberating. Science is conceived as free play — the sphere where anything goes — no matter the orthodoxies of Church or high born society. This is the ruse of a coopted conventionality. It should not be surprising to find that science has taken the place of its former opponents. This

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.* p. 122. Thus there is a tendency to continually ignore the complexity of the real world in order to focus on the world constituted from a given scientific perspective. If Nietzsche pointed out that there is no choice in this (this is Nietzsche's perspectivism), this was not lost on Feyerabend, who is careful to underscore the annihilatingly exclusive nature of a perspective. Correspondences between Feyerabend and Nietzsche should not be overplayed. Feyerabend remained an analytic philosopher all his life. Despite routine references to correspondences between him and Nietzsche, from critics and friends alike, Feyerabend claimed to have been underwhelmed by Nietzsche, acknowledging "much to agree with, but nothing to write home about." Personal correspondence.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

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criticism is proper to the social studies of knowledge, sociologists, political theorists, historians and others. The different question of the value of scientific truth is a disciplinary question for those philosophers who can, at their best, think in and with the contradictions proper to thought itself.

The postmodern confidence in the postmodern "sophistications" of science and technology was the reason for the inclusion of the "mole" essay in an issue of a lit-crit journal devoted to science.[36] The idea of postmodern sophistication represents the ultimate conversion of the modern in architecture, music, art, as well as theory and public consciousness, and is perhaps best exemplified in the virtual image of cyberspace. With declared irony, postmodern sophistication promises a solution to the limitations of the modern ideal of progress in the commercial, corporate, quasi-industrial guise of what is soberly or "technically" called "playfulness." *It is not that such a resolution to today's problems would or could* be *wrong*, but only that it is more elusive and much harder than its advocates seem to imagine.[37] Play requires what might be called hell in one's heart, together with every hopes and expectation.[38]

Whatever the postmodern condition of what can be known about science, requiring a properly philosophical or epistemic viewpoint, there is and can be nothing like a postmodern perspective within science. There is no postmodern science as such, no matter the status of epistemic sophistication after Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault or Baudrillard. This is not because all these thinkers held science in high esteem but, rather, because science is not reflection on, the thinking of, the theory of, but only the certification of knowledge. As he sought to clarify the constantly mistaken import of his opposition to method, Feyerabend pointed out how scientific progress is only incidentally rational.

36. For the original rendering of such "sophistication," see David Kolb, *Postmodern Sophistications* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

37. The postmodern salvific project of playfulness underestimates the serious innocence of invention or creativity and fails to prise the supreme elegance, poise and utter absorption of play for both children and consummate adults. This is not a matter of the challenges of sport or of speculative calculation. In its most serious guise, play is closer to a kitten's fierce fight with a piece of cotton than to modern competition in any of its masculine varieties. Unfathomably real, everything and nothing is at stake when the child, lost in the toss, spins a top or a rhyming line or a kitten plays with string. As distant from real hell as from real hope, the game is easy to describe and prescribe, be it a language game, a ball game, a chess game, a game of dice, or the unreal game of postmodern playfulness. Whatever play is, it is not a game.

38. This image is inspired by Gillian Rose's epigraph to her autobiographical record of living and dying in her *Love's Work: A Reckoning with Life* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995): "Keep your mind in hell, and despair not."

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"Laws, theories, basic patterns of thinking, facts, even the most elementary logical principles are transitory results not defining properties in this process. Scientists . . . forge ahead and constantly define science (and knowledge, and logic) by their work."[39] Science is skilled labor and, in this sense, it is an "art" or Feyerabend's guilded craft. Science has the practical knowledge of production: it works. This does not mean that science has to do with thinking. For calculation is not about reflection but all about production of effects, within what Feyerabend claimed must always be named "narrow limits," for the sake of appearances.

Does Feyerabend's claim that scientists define or make science by their work mean that science, insofar as it works and along with art is a human invention? Like science, art exceeds in both influence and significance the cultural world that gave birth to it. The Vichian axiom that we can know only what we make does not mean that we already know what we have done. "We are," Nietzsche wrote, "*neither as proud nor as happy as we might be.*"[40] Like art, religion and the world, we have made the science that concerns us. The science that influences and interests us is the science that works for us. This does not mean, to speak in the deliberately vulgar language of an Alan Sokal, that there is an "objective" world. The question of the objective truth of the world apart from our knowledge of it is an absurdity.

Science does not prove the existence of an objective world, but any number of subjects do so by their common perceptions, assumptions and inborn prejudices.[41] This is the conceptual, technological world required for words such as *channel-surfing* to have meaning. This is the play of a paradigm. For Feyerabend once again, society changes and science follows. "Nineteenth century science denied the advantages of cultural plurality; twentieth century science, chastened by a series of rather upsetting [*NB: extra-scientific or social*] revolutions . . . recognizes them."[42] This is the play of the world. In the spirit of the Nietzsche whose influence he would not acknowledge, Feyerabend describes the world as "a dynamic

39. Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason*, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

40. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, tr. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 242.

41. For medieval monks there are real angels, knit in a hierarchy of dominations and thrones, rather different from today's New Age fascination with private angels or spiritual guides. William Blake saw real angels lodged in the tree-branches of his embryonically industrialized England. Like Blake's angels, utterly modern, there are (or given current theories of stellar evolution, there had better be) neutrinos for modern physicists, and the ether, once consigned to the realms of romantic fancy, seems to be making a comeback as the framework for energy in the universe.

42. Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason*, *op. cit.*, p. 89. Italics added. See also p. 126.

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and multifaceted entity which affects and reflects the activity of its explorers. It was once a world full of gods; it then became a drab material world and it will, hopefully, change further into a more peaceful world where matter and life, thought and feelings, innovation and tradition collaborate for the benefit of all."[43]

What is the role of philosophy in all this? Beyond art and literature, the special value of philosophical study does not simply advance intellectual acquaintance with the range and tenor of human possibility.[44] Rather, the study of philosophy is indispensable if one would learn how to think. Heidegger, the discredited master of obscurity, observed that science does not think. Well before Heidegger, it was the mathematician *and* scientist *and* philosopher René Descartes who thought it important to remember the danger of assuming that thinking could ever be a skill one did not need to learn. It is necessary, as Feyerabend put it, "to go beyond empty slogans and to start *thinking*."[45] What a revolution thinking might be for science cannot be said. But it can be averred that learning to think cannot be done without philosophy.

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43. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
44. The importance of philosophy is different from the Shakespeare studies George Steiner advocated on behalf of the humanistic value of the humanities. See *The Chronical of Higher Education* (June 21, 1996), p. B5.
45. Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason*, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

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Adorno, Jazz and Racism: "Über Jazz" and the 1934-7 British Jazz Debate

Evelyn Wilcock

Discussions of Adorno's "Abschied vom Jazz" ("Goodbye to Jazz" — 1933) and "Über Jazz" ("On Jazz" — 1936) have focused on his association of jazz with the commercial music industry and his failure to credit jazz as black music. Given Adorno's views on mass culture, this is hardly surprising. The issues he tackled and the vocabulary he used, however, were those current in Britain, where Adorno wrote "Über Jazz" while completing a doctorate on Husserl at Merton College, Oxford.[1] Seen in the context of broader British debates concerning racism and popular culture, "Über Jazz" reveals a rich picture of Adorno's concerns at the time. His initial perspective on jazz had been that of a music critic who thought jazz was wrongly represented in new music.[2] The incorporation of jazz elements contributed to the immense popularity of serious works such as Krenek's *Johnny Spielt Auf* (*Johnny Strikes Up)* or Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, but could not guarantee it. It was this popularity which interested Adorno. In 1933, he argued that jazz had already deservedly gone out of fashion because it was a limited musical form and lacked potential,[3] and he accused the music

1. Theodor W. Adorno, under the pseudonym Hektor Rottweiler, "Über Jazz" in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Vol. 5 No. 2 (1936), pp. 235-259 and reprinted with variations in *Moments Musicaux* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962) pp. 84-115. Page numbers refer to the Suhrkamp edition.

2. Theodor W. Adorno, "Frankfurt Opera and Concert Criticism" (December 27, 1927), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 19 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), p. 118.

3. Theodor W. Adorno, "Abschied vom Jazz," in *Europäische Revue*, No. 9 (1933), pp. 795-9. This first article on jazz, written while he was still in Germany, ironically supported the Nazi ban on black jazz (*Negerjazz*) on German radio.

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industry of exploiting popular taste for what was foreign or exotic. He also complained that the Nazis misrepresented jazz as a racial threat to white culture even though it had little connection with African music.

This was the state of Adorno's work when he arrived in England[4] to find his anxieties about the commercialization of jazz and its racist overtones justified. His exile coincided with a public craze for what by then were early jazz classics.[5] The examples he used in his jazz essays were jazz hits (*Jazzschlager*). He had already analyzed other hits in 1929.[6] The intense popularity of jazz titles may have reinforced Adorno's suspicions about jazz' military potential. Jazz had come to Europe with the American armies in WWI and "Tiger Rag," which was the first jazz piece recorded in defeated Germany, incorporated chord progressions from Sousa's instrumentation of the "Gettysburg March."[7] "Bugle Call Rag" had been a hit in Germany and since 1932 had also soared in popularity in Britain as the signature tune of Harry Roy's band; [8] It was this combination of military and the *volkish* that dismayed Adorno.[9] "In place of the individual in jazz," he

4. On Adorno's arrival in England and his decision to study at Oxford, see Evelyn Wilcock, "Adorno's Uncle: Dr. Bernard Wingfield and the English Exile of Theodor W. Adorno 1934-8," in *German Life and Letters*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (July 1996), pp. 324-338.

5. At an Oxbridge summer ball in 1933, Billy Cotton's Band was requested to repeat "Tiger Rag" over thirty consecutive times. See *Melody Maker* (January 12, 1935), p. 2. The summer of 1934, when Adorno was in London looking for work, Teddy Joyce played on the Embankment for the lunch-time crowds. Record companies reissued old recordings. "Kitten on the Keys" came out on a Parlophone record as a piano duet again in May 1934. Advertisements for Brunswick records featured old favorites: "Jungle Fever," "Bugle Call Rag" and "Tiger Rag," of which the December 1, 1934 issue of *Melody Maker,* page 6,listed 52 recordings over 17 years. See Adorno, "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

6. Theodor W. Adorno, "Schlageranalysen," in *Anbruch* No. 11 (March 3, 1929), pp. 108-114, reprinted in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 18, pp. 778-88. The second of these was "Valencia," a 6/8 tune with added syncopation. Adorno referred again to "Valencia" in "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 87.

7. See Max Harrison, "Jazz," in Stanley Sadie, ed., *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1981). The composer Nick la Rocca claimed it was patterned after an aria from an unnamed Spanish opera. See Leonard Feather reporting from America, in *Radio Times*, London (August 21, 1936), p. 11.

8. A *Melody Maker* feature of March 2, 1935 lists 19 recordings. King Oliver's Chicago recording of "High Society Rag" is still sold with notes which explain its alternation of military music with patriotic song. See Edward Brooks, Notes to "High Society Rag" on "King Oliver, Vol. 1, Great Original Performances 1923-1929," Jazz Classics RPCD 607, 1991.

9. It should be pointed out, however, that military bands offered underprivileged children the opportunity to play. Rudolph Dunbar, the black British clarinettist, got his first chance in a garrison band in British Guyana, and Theodore Wilson played oboe in the military band at the Tuskegee Institute, Alabama. Jamaican trumpeter, Leslie Thompson, came to Britain in 1919 to study at Kneller Hall, the military school of music.

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wrote, "there comes the militarily noble and devilishly fine-sounding symphonic jazz marches whose shining closedness allows no gap for the appearance of anything human."[10] His criticism was not directed only at Germany and certainly fits the splendid 1995 playing of "Tuxedo Junction" by the massed bands of the Guards Division at "Beating the Retreat" in London.[11]

It is difficult to claim that Adorno never heard real jazz. In the university setting hot music was ubiquitous. One of Adorno's later contacts at Merton College, the New Zealand journalist John Mulgan, described Oxford in summer 1934, when Adorno first arrived, with punts drifting down the river accompanied by the sound of jazz.[12] Alan Jenkins relates how he had known many people at Oxford, himself included, who never wrote any essays without first psyching themselves up with swing records.[13] The background music at Elliston's department store, where undergraduates went for morning coffee, included "Mood Indigo" and "Tiger Rag."[14] In 1930 the Oxford University Musical Club (of which Adorno was later a member) had questioned the use of its practice rooms for playing jazz. By April 1934, however, they were prepared to lay aside their aversion to dance music and discuss a proposal for a Musical Club dance.[15] At student sherry parties, gramophones would be played with the persons nearest putting on the records of their choice, "sometimes the long-drawn strains of a sentimental waltz, sometimes the shrieks of some colored band, 'producing the type of music that burns holes in the carpet'," wrote Dosoo Karaka, of Lincoln College — the first Indian to be president of the Oxford Union.[16]

One of the themes of "Über Jazz" is the relation between the relatively privileged student jazz enthusiasts and commercial interests. A

10. Adorno, "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 115.

11. Adorno's observation concerning the similarities between the use of drums to maintain the beat in marching and that of the rhythm section to back jazz solos seems less eccentric in view of recent disagreement over the contentious relation between dancing and military drill. See *Times Literary Supplement*, Letters of August 2, 9 and 16, 1996 relating to William H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time*, (Cambridge, Massachussetts: Harvard university Press, 1996).

12. John Mulgan, "River Trees and Sunshine," *Oxford* (June 8, 1934) in *The Auckland Star*, Magazine Section, p. 1, Auckland, New Zealand (July 14, 1934).

13. *Radio Times* (September 4, 1936), p. 13.

14. Beatrix Walsh, "Women at Oxford, Now and Then," in *Oxford Magazine* 98 (Michaelmas Term, 1993), p. 12.

15. For Adorno's participation in Oxford University Musical Club after October 1934, see Evelyn Wilcock, "Adorno in Oxford 1: Oxford University Musical Club," in *Oxford Magazine* 127 (4th week Hilary Term 1996), p. 11.

16. On Dosoo Karaka, see British Library Catalogue listing under Dosabhai. Framj Karaka Dosabhai, *The Pulse of Oxford* (London: J. M. Dent & Son, 1933), p. 49.

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student group from Cambridge University had been raised to professional status and brief glory in 1928 playing "Hot" music at the Savoy under the Spanish American composer Fred Elizalde. Since 1926 there had been a student jazz band in Oxford: the Oxford University Bandits. Every effort was made by the proctors to see that this band did not compete unfairly with professionals.[17] But while Adorno was in Oxford, this group was much sought after and played at the authorized dances organized by the women's colleges. Adorno was not segregated from Oxford social life. Isaiah Berlin recalls seeing him at a commemoration ball.[18]

At Adorno's own college, Merton, the Bandits played for the "floor polisher" dance in May 1936. The playing at Merton's major college commemoration ball the following week (May 27, 1936) was as usual left to professionals — Marius B. Winter's band whom *Isis*, the Oxford student paper, deemed "uninteresting." Adorno sought to analyze the greater attraction of amateur composers and players whose musical competence sometimes fell short of professional standards.[19] *Isis* carried a regular "Rhythm" column reviewing jazz records for jazz fans, who regarded themselves as individualists and dissenters. Yet, they were actually an adjunct to the music industry, tied to it through a concealed agenda of special promotions or discounts, advertising and subsidy for specialized magazines. Throughout Britain jazz fans established "Rhythm Clubs" where they could listen to jazz, both live and on record. These clubs constituted a market[20] that could

17. Letters dated January 28, 1926, February 19, 1929 and February 17, 1935. Archives of the University of Oxford. PR3/2/59. Thanks are due to the University authorities and to the Proctors for permitting access to University archives and for permission to relay information contained in them.

18. Conversation with the author, March 22, 1995.

19. "[The amateur] invests in the production of jazz that fund of unconscious musical and extra-musical associations, expectations, categories and technical shortcomings that in a musician are either eliminated through professional training or brought to consciousness, and once lost can never be reconstructed; and which, nonetheless, provide an essential and perhaps decisive condition of the effect of jazz on the public; an incalculable contribution to commercial success." See Adorno, "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 101.

20. During 1935-6, jazz was marketed to a wider audience than ever before. Early in 1935 the price of dance records was sharply reduced from 2/6 to 1/6d to compete with the lower price already offered by Decca. See *Melody Maker* (January 19, 1935). Beginning in April 1936, the BBC moved its jazz to prime time and provided three quarters of an hour of dance music every night. Jazz experts were divided as to the effect of the mass market. Stanley Nelson was as pessimistic as Adorno. Leonard Feather, on the other hand, felt the popularization and commercialization of jazz could not damage it. More popularity was what had always been wanted and the best jazz players played both commercial music and swing. See Stanley Nelson, *All About Jazz* (London: Heath Cranton, 1934), p. 29; and Leonard Feather, "What's Wrong with 'Pops'?" in *Melody Maker* (November 14, 1936).

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be targeted, manipulated and exploited. Adorno used this as a paradigm for all market societies.

During his first year in England, Adorno was trying to negotiate the performance of his own songs on the BBC. Mátyás Seiber, who had taught the jazz class at the Frankfurt Konservatoire, had recently arrived in Britain as a refugee and was actively trying to make a living as a composer and arranger.[21] Both had a personal interest in the music publishing business and in understanding what went into creating a hit. Their discussion was colored by the fact that the smash-hit of 1934-5, "The Isle of Capri," was by a fellow refugee, William Grosz, and had been accepted by Peter Maurice and Company only after Grosz had failed to sell it to larger publishers.[22] In January 1936, Adorno drafted an empirical survey of the music publishing business for the Institute for Social Research, which was eventually rejected by its Director, Max Horkheimer.[23] The British music press was already debating whether hits were consumer-generated or whether financial interest pushed music publishers and bands away from serious music in search of best-sellers.

Adorno deplored the abuse of jazz by commercial publishers, yet he also recognized that jazz composers such as Ellington exploited hot elements in their works to satisfy public demand. Thus, although "Capri" was not advertised with Maurice's "famous Hot series," it also became a jazz hit after it was recorded in New York by Wingy Manone in March 1935.[24] Adorno realized that the role of the arranger was not always for

21. See Nick Chadwick, "Mátyás Seiber's Collaboration in Adorno's Jazz Project, 1936," in *British Library Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1996), pp. 59-88. The Seiber/Adorno correspondence has been published by Chadwick. Seiber's annotations to Adorno's draft are undated, but since some of Seiber's suggestions are incorporated in the published text (1936) they may date from before Adorno's letter to Seiber, dated June 20, 1936. British Library, Add. MSS 62784-62887 and Dep. 9319.

22. In the October 19, 1935 issue of *Melody Maker* (p. 6), Robert Addis described trying to sell his composition to Charing Cross Road music publishers and concluded that one could not get anywhere unless one wrote a hit. The August 7, 1936 issue of *Radio Times*, p. 6, carried a similar column by Leonard Feather.

23. Letter from Horkheimer to Adorno, dated December 8, 1936, in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer 1995), Vol. 15, p. 763.

24. As if to confirm Adorno's misgivings, Manone, a New Orleans musician whose name was of Italian/French origin, resented its association in the popular mind with the Italian sounding "Isle of Capri." He also complained about having to enlarge his band as a concession to popular taste. See *Swing Music* (October 1935), p. 217. Manone (spelled Mannone in source) was a childhood friend of Louis Armstrong and shared Adorno's view that jazz originated in white military music. See the interview article by Marshall Stearns, President of Yale University Hot Club in *Hot News and Record Review* (July 4, 1935), p. 6.

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the worse.[25] There was much favorable publicity in March 1936 when the black American arranger Benny Carter moved from France to work for Henry Hall at the BBC. The 1930s big band sound is now known as "swing," but the suggestion that Adorno was confusing it with jazz ignores debates about terminology in the British press.[26] In January 1935, the expression "hot" music was banned from the BBC: it had to be called "bright" or "swing." The broadcasting of scat singing was also stopped. The *Radio Times Musical Handbook* provided a glossary of musical terms used in radio. Its editor, Percy Scholes, challenged Leonard Hibbs, editor of *Swing Music*, to provide a definition of "swing" for the 1936 new edition. *Swing Music* was the official journal of the Rhythm Clubs, which catered to jazz fans. Scholes pointed out that the expression "swing" did not exist in 1931 and Hibbs himself had said that swing music was just jazz.[27] Adorno resolutely continued to employ the expression "hot jazz," which also survives in France. There, Hughes Panassié, the leading jazz commentator, said that jazz could not be defined. The October 14, 1936 issue of *Isis* commented that trying to differentiate between popular dance and swing music was "an impossible task." Adorno's opening sentence of "Über Jazz" was strikingly topical. "The question concerning what is to be understood by jazz seems to mock the unambiguously definitive answer."[28] Scholes wrote that he could not believe that unsophisticated

25. As he wrote in "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 97: "Oddly enough the composer is responsible for the conventional part of jazz. The person who modifies it is the arranger, sometimes attached to the publisher, sometimes to the band, always closely associated with the reproducers of the music; and, if you compare the performance of a good band with the score of the piano reduction . . . the qualified musicians are to be numbered among the arrangers and not among the composers." This interest in the role of the arranger was shared by British journalists. Thus, in May 1936 issue *The Gramophone* (p. 525), Edgar Jackson also inquired into the effect of American record companies' arrangers on jazz composition.

26. See Heinz Steinert, *Die Entdeckung der Kulturindustrie oder: Warum Professor Adorno Jazz-Musik nicht ausstehen konnte* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1992). Edgar Jackson argued that initially swing was used as a substitute for hot jazz. "Far from dying, jazz is not only more alive today than ever but is becoming increasingly popular in what the diehards will say is its most obnoxious form. I refer to hot or as we now term it, Swing music." See Edgar Jackson "Conversations on Jazz," in *The Gramophone* (June 1935), p. 27.

27. British Broadcasting Corporation, *Radio Times Music Handbook*, ed. Percy Scholes (London: BBC, 3rd ed. 1936). In *The Gramophone* Compton Mackenzie had offered a prize for the best definition of "swing," which he eventually awarded. Scholes complained it had not been deserved. In the *News Chronicle*, Christopher Stone asked the same question, but received no good replies. See *The Gramophone* Vol. 14, No. 160 (Sept. 1936), pp. 139-40 and (October 1936), pp. 183-4.

28. Adorno, "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 84

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Southern Negroes and clever New York Jews had flooded the world with music that could always be recognized but not defined.[29] Adorno challenged the racist premise of the question.

Black Jazz

It has been suggested that Adorno had no experience of black jazz on which to base his argument.[30] This is untenable.[31] Neither Britain nor Europe was cut off from great black American players, live and on records. Adorno arrived in London in early Summer 1934 — a time when Coleman Hawkins was enjoying great success.[32] Duke Ellington, Art Tatum and Louis Armstrong all played in Britain between 1934 and 1936. Distinctions between swing and jazz, or between big and small bands, were not pertinent. Visiting stars played with large bands. After the evening performance was over, however, soloists and band players resorted to smaller groups and clubs.[33] This is why, in "Über Jazz," Adorno pointed out that, for all its claims to be democratic music, the jazz of virtuoso players was reserved for the rich.[34]

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29. *Radio Times* (December 25, 1936), p. 7.

30. See, e.g., J. Bradford Robinson, "The Jazz Essays of Theodor Adorno: Some Thoughts on Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany," in *Popular Music*, (Vol. 31/1, 1994, pp. 1-25.), which relates "Über Jazz" exclusively to the reception of jazz in Weimar Germany. For another perspective on jazz in Germany, see Michael Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

31. Thus, in 1937 Adorno mentioned going to a black night club in Soho. See correspondence Horkheimer/Adorno, in Horkheimer Archiv, University of Frankfurt am Main, letter dated October 1, 1937. This could have been the up-market club, "the Nest," in Kingly Street, where American musicians such as Coleman Hawkins, Fats Waller, Benny Carter and Dizzy Gillespie often played (Val Wilmer, conversation with the author, February 1996). Another possibility would have been the club referred to as "Harlem in London": the reopened "Shim Sham" in Wardour Street, where the black entertainer Ike Hatch worked from 1936. Karaka refers to "Harlemania," a den in the back streets of the West End where orchestra and cabaret were often improvised from the clientele. "It is one of the few places where a colored man can actually feel at home." F. K. Dosabhai, *Oh You English* (London: Frederick Muller, 1935), p. 49. Rudolph Dunbar, "Harlem in London: Year of advancement for Negroes" in *Melody Maker* (March 7, 1936), p. 2. A. Gray "London After Dark Swing Spots" (series of 14 articles) *Melody Maker* (April 17, July 10, July 24, and September 17, 1937).

32. See *Melody Maker* (May 12, 1934). Thus, Adorno emphasized the transformation of the saxophone in the hands of jazz players — something which obviously escaped Mátyás Seiber, who arrived in London after Hawkins had left for the continent.

33. Thus, in May 1934 Hawkins played at the Gig Club. Many musicians gathered to hear him, and Nat Gonella, Freddy Gardner and George Evans formed an improvised band until he arrived. See *Melody Maker* (May 12, 1934).

34. Adorno, "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 90.

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In London, black musicians confronted the same discrimination Adorno as a non-Aryan had encountered in Germany. Adorno was able to book hotel accommodation near Paddington at the time when the Mills brothers were turned away because of the color of their skin. At the time most black players resident in Britain were West Indians.[35] A West Indian Paramount touring show with Snakehips Johnson was put together in September 1936.[36]

Adorno had been warned by Edward Dent, then Professor of Music at Cambridge University, about protectionism among musicians. It barred both Adorno and Coleman Hawkins from working in Britain as effectively as in Nazi Germany. The difficulty of negotiating musicians' fees was aggravated by the casual nature of the work and the involvement in jazz of amateur and semi-professional players (known in the trade as semi-pros).[37] The monthly *Rhythm* was protectionist. Until it was taken over by Odhams and turned into an adjunct to *Melody Maker* in October 1935, no black faces were featured in its photo pages while American black musicians were insulted and disparaged for their sound, their sexual behavior, drugs or even for the way they sweated as they played.[38] The "jazz music of the South American Negroes could have a real future in civilized countries only if it were stripped of its barbarity and crude rhythm" by white orchestrators such as Paul Whiteman.[39] Stravinsky was credited with rendering jazz civilized; Adorno, on the other hand, criticized his use of jazz to accompany a

35. See *Melody Maker* (September 5, 1936), p. 9. Other black players were dispersed through British bands where black and white played together — something not yet permitted in the US. Sydney Lipton's Grosvenor House band had a black sax player. From 1931 to 1951, Billy Cotton's band included as second sax the black American trombone player and dancer Ellis Jackson, who had lived in Britain since 1907. The participation of black players in London's best bands did not signify racial equality. Thus, even *Melody Maker* (January 12, 1935) p. 2, described Jackson as "a light footed level headed 'chocolate boy'."

36. Adorno was right in questioning the cosmetic function of a black face in a jazz band. An interview with the American Stride pianist Joe Turner reveals how black players were sought after to lend authenticity to jazz bands in Britain and on the continent. See James Burden, "Conversation with Joe Turner, Last of the Stride Pianists," in *The Black Perspective in Music*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Fall 1981), p. 186. Turner joined Benny Payton's Band in Lausanne. The musicians ". . . were all fair-skinned people. They had trouble in Lausanne when they opened. The boss wouldn't pay them their money in person; he would send it by the head waiter. . . He was displeased; he wanted to see black faces. So, the day I joined the band, he ran up and said, 'That's who I want.' He wouldn't speak to anyone else in the band but me. To him I was a colored man."

37. See, e.g., Jack Payne on the influence of Semi Pro bands, in *Rhythm (*October 1935), p. 17. This period showed a revival of Musicians' Union activity in London and the appointment of its first Dance Band organizer in 1937. See Mike Jempson, *The Musicians' Union 1893-93* (London: MU, 1993).

38. See *Rhythm* (October 1934), p. 7.

39. Charlie Kunz, "Mass Produced Music," in *Rhythm* (October 1935), p. 29.

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savage human sacrifice.[40] *Rhythm* resented German composers ("any Schmidt — Al — or Guggenheim is allowed to come into this country") as much as black Americans. "Let us connect with the Empire, this Motherland — this England; and remember foreigners did not put us where we are. It was *pride of race* that won us our unusual position in the world. It was the dogged determination that we call the Bulldog breed."[41] Adorno wittily chose to write about jazz as a German, using the name Rottweiler.

The weekly *Melody Maker* took a different line. It promoted black jazz and protested against British prejudice when visiting American players were turned away from hotels.[42] The black band leader Rudolph Dunbar, a fine clarinettist from Guyana who had been trained in New York and at the Paris Conservatoire, wrote regularly for *Melody Maker* not just on classical clarinet playing but on race issues as well. Describing what it was like to be black in Britain in the 1930s, he detailed his difficulties finding accommodation on tour or calming small children who had never seen a black person, but had been told that if they were naughty the black man would take them away.[43] Dunbar pleaded for "parity of esteem" between blacks and whites — and this was Adorno's thesis as well.

Enthusiasm for jazz often hinged on the concept of racial difference. Thus Adorno's co-editor at *Anbruch*, Paul Stefan, had described jazz as a fresh (and advantageous) transfusion of Negro blood.[44] Eleven years later Stanley Nelson's admiring references to basic racial rhythms still relied on race theorists such as Houston Chamberlain.[45] Black experts on African music, such as the Zulu professor Thiola'kale Caluza, seemed to lend support to these suggestions.[46] Claims that only blacks could play jazz were a problem for undergraduate amateurs in Oxford. The "Rhythm"

40. Adorno, "Uber Jazz," op. cit., p. 110.

41. Bruce Sievier, "Play for Great Britain!" in *Rhythm* (May 1935), pp. 17-18. Italics in original.

42. *Melody Maker* (May 12, 1934).

43. Rudolph Dunbar, "Adventures of a Black Man. What the Colour Bar Means to the Individual," in *Melody Maker* (May 19, 1934), p. 11. The first issue of *Hot News and Rhythm Record Review* (April 1935) carried articles by Ike Hatch and the black pianist Garland Wilson on an equal basis with white contributors.

44. In *Anbruch*, 1924, as quoted in "Entartete Musik Exhibition," Festival Hall, London, Jan. 1996. For race and jazz issues in Germany and further bibliography, see Kater, *op. cit.*

45. Stanley Nelson, "Philosophical Ramblings," in *Melody Maker*, February 9, 1935, p. 1.

46. *Melody Maker* (March 21, 1936) p. 15. The July 1935 issue of *Hot News* reinforced similar racial distinctions. "The reason most people understand nothing of negro music is because they do not know that the resemblance between the black and white races is only superficial. A negro is not just a white man with a colored exterior. His mind is different. He thinks differently along altogether different lines." p. 19.

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column in the January 22, 1936 issue of *Isis* reviewed with gratitude Parlophone's "hot" or "swing" music: "[Parlophone have] released this month a British Artists' Rhythm Style series which. . . . explodes the theory that no one can play 'swing' music but the Negroes. . . . If you are an out-and-out Negro worshipper, then in all probability you will not be impressed by these records, which have a polish and charm that is all their own; you will miss, perhaps, the vitality and spontaneity of the Negros playing, the coarser rhythm section and the fierce solos."

Later that semester, on March 4, a review of a record from Parlophone's "Music of the Races" series, "The Negro and his Music," was criticized as being light comedy rather than hot jazz.[47] The opposition to jazz in Oxford exploited these racial stereotypes. The same week the fascist leader Oswald Mosley held a meeting in Oxford, Professor Joad complained at the Union that modern civilization was noisy, ugly and vulgar: "The ether vibrates with negroid music."[48] Adorno has been accused of disassociating jazz from blacks. On the contrary, he was challenging these cultural labels and exposing the often unconscious prejudice behind them. Given the chance to select an "ideal" band, experts in Britain and the US opted for a mix of black and white star players.[49]

Oxford criticism of the Nazi regime went hand in hand with a scrutiny of racism in the US and Britain. Oxford prided itself in leading the way towards emancipation. Thus, in 1934 the *Daily Mail* protested that an Indian had been elected President of the Oxford Union. While Adorno was in Oxford, an *Isis* editorial by Keith Briant from Merton College exposed the exclusion of Asians from a Conservative club.[50] Merton College also provided Adorno with contact with American Rhodes scholar, Paul Engel, and others critical of predominant attitudes in their own country.

The moral authority assumed by European governments in the Hoare Laval plan for appeasing Italian aggression in Ethiopia (Winter 1935-6) was eagerly challenged by Oxford Left, where the Indian Majlis club was a center of colonial nationalism.[51] The records of the Merton College

47. *Isis*, (January 22, 1936), p. 18 and (March 4, 1936), p. 23. The author, "APFW," was probably Peter Watt, leader of the OU Bandits who, in the November 25, 1936 issue of *Isis*, was reported to have graduated, p. 2.

48. *Isis* (May 27, 1936), p. 6.

49. See *Melody Maker* (July 7, 1934), and *Radio Times* (August 28, 1936). In the US, however, a mixed band was not yet feasible.

50. "Colour Bar in Oxford," in *Isis* (October 28, 1936). Keith Briant also collaborated with Karaka on a play, the "Colour Bar."

51. Eric Williams, *Inward Hunger* (London: André Deutsch, 1969).

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discussion group, the Bodley Club, mentions these issues as being discussed. Adorno was not a club member but, on November 6, 1935, John Mulgan, read a paper on Abyssinia, "White Cargo and Black Baggage" and on November 22, 1935, American Rhodes scholar Merrimon Cuninggim (who came from what he called "lynching country") read a paper on "Black Song" in which he sang spirituals learned from his black nurse, and examined the effect of their peculiar social position on black American poets.[52] Thoroughly in step with his Oxford circle, Adorno accused the British and American entertainment industries of perpetuating a stereotype of blacks as lackeys and idiots.[53]

Black Students in Oxford.

British experience of successfully governing "colored" peoples and integrating them into Western Society was overstated in the jazz press and contrasted with the American practice of segregation. The section[54]

52. Minutes of the Bodley Club 1931-7, Archive of Merton College Oxford. Cuninggim as Dean of the Perkins School of Theology of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, was later to pioneer graduate school desegregation in the American South. Mr. John Hill. Conversation with the author, July 1996. Thanks to the Merton College Archives.

53. Thus, in "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 94, he wrote that the triumph of jazz parodied that of colonial imperialism. Adorno was not insulated from German attitudes nor from the scientific discussion of racial difference. As a child he had also been terrified by the frightening image of black men — demons seeking to take him away. See Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (New York and London: Verso, 1974), tr. by E. F. N. Jephcott, p. 114. See also Adorno, "Heliotrope," *op. cit.*, p. 178. His fiancée's uncle, Dr. Johann Karplus, who was one of Adorno's contacts in Vienna, had made comparative examinations of the brains of supposedly primitive people from Africa and Australia. See Österreichischen Ak. der Wissenschaften, *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950*, ed. by Leo Santiffaller and Eva von Obermeyer-Marnach (Graz-Cologne: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nachf. 1963). What music blacks should play was of more than passing interest to Adorno, who came to England with the libretto of his projected opera *Indiana Joe*. It featured the mixed-blood Indian Joe, ("Do you think its for fun that I'm half Indian?") and the black slave boy Jim as well as some ominous dialogue.: "Tom: 'If the doctor dies someone will be hanged.' Huck: 'A black man will be hanged.' Tom: 'But it wasn't him.' Huck: 'No one was there. So a black man will be hanged'." Adorno, *Indianer Joe* [text 1932-3] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), p. 27.

54. During the 1930s most non-white students were from India/Burma. There were less than 15 black students from East and West Africa when Adorno was there, and none at Merton. See "Archive of the University of Oxford, Minutes of the Delegacy for Oriental Students." UDC/M/20/1 and LHD/SF/1/5. This is from the yearly records provided by the University Delegacy for Oriental Students, primarily responsible for students from the Indian sub-continent and others studying for the Indian Civil Service examinations. Returns for Michaelmas Term 1934 show 103 students, classified by five geographical regions, with a small number classified as "Other." Black undergraduates from East and West Africa were placed in this final category. There is no figure for black and Asian students from the West Indies, though it cannot have been high. See Eric Williams, *Inward Hunger*, *op, cit.*

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"Savages are not More Noble" in *Minima Moralia* shows that the situation of black students in Oxford was something Adorno thought about. Oxford offered a degree (PPE) combining politics, philosophy and economics. He noticed a tendency among black and Siamese PPE students to identify with the establishment in order to gain acceptance. One black PPE student who was sure to have attracted attention was Eric Williams, the future Prime Minister of Trinidad, whose outstanding performance at Oxford earned him one of the top three Oxford History degrees of 1935.[55]

Along with Rudolph Dunbar, Williams set out to challenge prejudice by proving himself the equal of any white student.[56] After graduating, Williams failed to receive the Fellowship either in his own college or at All Souls, which would normally have been the case had he been white. "No 'native' however de-tribalized, could fit socially into All Souls."[57] The achievements of men such as Karaka and Williams in Oxford challenged the cultural stereotypes propagated by jazz enthusiasts. According to Hibbs, even the best players of swing music were musically illiterate. "It is physical music and its urge is almost entirely physical. Even when 'composed' the appeal is sensual rather than mental." All depended on the "sunburned temperament." Adorno sought to correct the myth (*Negerfabel*) repeated by Scholes both in the *Radio Times* and in his book[58] that skin color was associated with a childish or primitive character. Adorno reiterated[59] that jazz bore little relation to

55. Williams supplemented his income by coaching Siamese undergraduates in French and his closest friend was the Siamese undergraduate, Chamkad Balankura from Balliol. Chamkad died in the early days of the Japanese invasion, "one of the heroes of the Siamese Resistance Movement." See Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 54. Williams recalled having Oxford friends from Nigeria and Ghana. Edward Afuko Addo from Achimota College was also at Oxford studying PPE. He eventually became Chief Justice of Ghana and was an honorary fellow of St. Peter's from 1967 till his death in 1979.

56. Adorno wrote perceptively that to tell a black person that he was exactly the same as everyone else was an affront because it denied the reality that his experience was different. See Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

57. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Yet, Williams stayed in Oxford to study philosophy, politics and economics for a year before doing a doctorate on the economic background of the British abolition of slavery.

58. For Hibbs and Scholes, see *Radio Times* (August 14, 1936), p. 6, and Percy Scholes, ed. *Radio Times Music Handbook, op. cit.*, p. 13.

59. Eric von Hornbostel, the renowned authority on African music, had taken refuge in Cambridge, but he was in poor health and died there November 28, 1935. Another exile, his pupil Klaus Wachsman, a Lutheran of Jewish origin, was also passionate about African music but the only way he could get to Uganda to record its music was as a teacher for the Chuch Missionary Society. Esther Simpson, conversation with the author March 1996. Wachsman remained in Kampala for twenty years, eventually becoming Curator of its museum.

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indigenous African music and later supported writers such as Winthrop Sergeant who shared his view. If the popular response to jazz was that blacks were intellectually less gifted than whites, "Über Jazz" combated it by insisting that, on the contrary, jazz demanded instrumental virtuosity and technical skill. The 2½ minute tracks on early gramophone records did not provide for long improvised solos. Even improvisation was tied to formal conventions and to a regular pulse in the accompaniment. Coleman Hawkins wrote a series of instructional articles which explained the technical basis of his improvisation. In "Abschied von Jazz," Adorno had referred engagingly to traces of the new music in the harmonies of jazz "which not only have a stimulating effect but remind us distantly and gruesomely-delightfully of the dissonance sphere of new music which one otherwise took care to avoid, but with which it seemed one could mingle here without danger."[60] Hawkins described using modern harmonies and playing against the tune for the sake of variety.[61] Adorno may have had early experience of co-operation between black and white jazz musicians and the required technique. Spike [Patrick] Hughes, who was a composition student in Vienna shortly before Adorno, claimed it was in 1924 at the Weihburg Bar that he first heard a black player, Arthur Briggs, leading a jazz band for which Briggs allowed him to compose. Since Hughes admitted to being influenced by Schoenberg, it is hardly surprising that the customers complained about the lack of tune and harmonies.[62]

Was Jazz Racist?

Was Adorno right in believing jazz was racist? "Über Jazz" argued that jazz musicians felt themselves confined by the culture industry and the material they were committed to play. Biographical accounts suggest that while jazz provided for the success of notable musicians of

60. Adorno, "Abscheid vom Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 796.

61. Coleman Hawkins, "Hot Playing," in *Melody Maker* (April 28, 1934).

62. *Swing Music* (March 1935), p. 18, and Patrick Cairns Hughes (Spike Hughes) *Opening Bars* (London: Pilot Press, 1946). For Arthur Briggs' subsequent career in Germany and France, see Horst H. Lange *Jazz in Deutschland; Die Deutsche Jazz-Chronik 1900-1960 with Discography* (Berlin, 1966) pp. 38-9 and p. 194. Briggs' 1927 German recording of "Bugle Call Rag" was a particular success. Hughes later endorsed Adorno's opinion: "above all things, though, I believe I learned from the *Blackbirds* orchestra that the music which cathedral organists and ill-informed writers of letters to newspapers described as 'barbaric,' 'undisciplined,' 'crude' and 'atavistic,' was in fact based on a remarkable technical precision of executions in ensemble passages, and a strict, unalterable set of rules governing all improvised playing." *Opening Bars*, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

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black or mixed descent, it might not have been their preferred career. Jazz may have intensified the majority identification of musicians of mixed descent with the stigmatized black minority. Hawkins, Fats Waller (who had a German grandfather) and the Creole pianist Jelly Roll Morton (born Ferdinand La Menthe) might all have been successful classical musicians had they been white.[63] Adorno would have known that Elizalde aspired to be a classical composer; his *Sinfonie Concertante* was performed at the Barcelona conference of the International Society for New Music in 1935. Though Dunbar toured with Lew Leslie's Blackbirds and played jazz on occasion, Dunbar insisted it was only to earn a living and that his first love was for Wagner and Elgar.[64] In the context of "Über Jazz," it is significant that Dunbar's preference for "white" classical music was considered "inappropriate" by his jazz-playing nephew.[65]

Adorno accused black or Jewish players of performing music which seemed to fit their low status. His allegations seem substantiated. A list in the December 15, 1934 of *Melody Maker* shows that the names invented for groups by the record companies for marketing purposes are stigmatizing, primitive or even sinister, whereas the names chosen by the professional players for themselves were neutral and factual, and simply identified the leader and his players.[66] The titles of jazz pieces year by year were just as negative and hardly likely to win the approval of Dunbar,

63. John Chilton, *The Song of the Hawk: The Life and Recordings of Coleman Hawkins* (London and New York: Quartet 1990); Alan Lomax, *Mr. Jelly Roll* (London: Cassell, 1952). See also Jelly Roll Morton, Circle recording from Archives of the University of Congress, cited in Rex Harris, *Jazz*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1953), pp. 54-5.

64. Val Wilmer, "Interview with Rudolph Dunbar," in *City Limits* March 7-13, 1986), p. 34. "Rudolph Dunbar: Pioneering Orchestra Conductor" in *The Black Perspective in Music*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Fall 1981) pp.193-225. See also sound archive sources. Rudoph Dunbar Radio Interview, Alex Pascal, re-broadcast in Dunbar obituary June 16, 1988, BBC GLR. Rudolph Dunbar in "Salutations: a Celebration of British Black Entertainers of the 30s, 40s and 50s," with Howard Rye. BBC Radio 2 (October 2, 1993), British Library, National Sound Archive.

65. Stanley Nelson made a point similar to Adorno when he wrote about serious black composers: "I have met serious Negro musicians who have detested jazz and all about it, although their feelings for their race were certainly as deep seated as those of any hophead dance musician in Harlem, they felt not the slightest inclination to bemoan their sorrows in the crudities of jazz as we know it." See *Melody Maker* (February 29, 1936), p. 6.

66. Thus Brunswick marketed "The Jungle Band," though all titles but two were played by Ellington's Orchestra and the remaining two by Chick Webb's Orchestra. The "Six Hottentots" were in fact Red Nicholls' Orchestra. The "Stokers of Hades" on Parlophone were Henderson's Orchestra. Other titles chosen by the record companies were "Chocolate Dandies," "Blind Will Dunn's Gin Bottle Four," and the "Blue Racketeers."

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Williams or other accomplished black Oxford students.[67] Adorno complained that black players co-operated in presenting themselves as fools.

Even before the advent of jazz, blacks had been exploited for working class entertainment.[68] Jazz was still part of the entertainment industry and even the most outstanding American players toured Britain appearing as part of variety shows.[69] Adorno described jazz players dismantling their instruments on stage. Though from a modern perspective the routine could be admired as de-constructionist, Adorno was sensitive enough to realize that it was conveying a humiliating racist message. Similar definitions of African art continue to be questioned by black writers. "It is often simplistically assumed that to say an artist's work is African is to imply that it portrays a well-defined set of features that are typically African or black. Of course, from this perspective, the very term 'typically African' conjures up images that are replete with black faces, quixotic forms, and phantasmagoric scenes. The view of African art as exotic, neoprimitive and expressionistic derives from the popular racist view of Africans (and by extension blacks) as unsophisticated and incapable of deep critical thought. It is a view that fails to acknowledge the range, breadth and diversity of works by African artists in diaspora."[70]

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67. "Hot Lips" and "Snake Hips" (1922); "Chinaman Blues" and "Black Sheep Blues" (1923); "Ethiopian Nightmare" (1924); "Why d'ya Roll those Eyes?" and "Ma Curly headed Baby" (1926). Still in 1926 — and spreading the ethnic net — there are "Moonlight on the Ganges," "Play Gypsies, Dance Gypsies" and "Thick lip Stomp." In the same year there is "Weary Blues" backed by "African Echoes" and "Senegalese Stomp" paired with "Nightmare." Louis Armstrong played "Oriental Strut" and "Jackass Blues." Jelly Roll Morton played "Billy Goat Stomp" and "Hyena Stomp." Blacks are represented as either stupid or animals, or both. In 1928 Benny Goodman played "Jungle Blues," in 1929, King Oliver, "Call of the Freaks." In 1930 Irving Mills' "'Barbaries" was followed by Ellington, "Echoes of the Jungle" and Don Redman, "Shakin' the African." See Roger D. Kinkle, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Popular Music and Jazz 1900-1950* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1974).

68. The program for the Christ Church, Oxford, servants' play on January 7, 1892 includes "Nigger Sketches" and the Cardinal Minstrels in "Emancipation Day," "The Old Homestead" and a comic song, "When you wash a Nigger White." See John Johnson Collection of Ephemera. Oxford Dance Programmes. Bodleian Library Oxford.

69. In 1934, the tenor sax Johnny Raitz left Jack Hylton's Band to be replaced by the German player, Freddy Schweitzer — a former circus clown. See *Melody Maker* (November 3, 1934). Ike Hatch at the Shim Sham was an ex-Vaudeville entertainer. Adrian Rollini played a miniature clarinet which he referred to as his "hot fountain pen."

70. N. Nzegwu "The Creation . . . . of the African Canadian Odyssey," in *International Journal of African American Art*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1992), pp. 16-37. Quoted by Barbara A. Hudson, "Images Used by African-Americans to Combat Negative Stereotypes" in Herbert W. Harris, Howard C. Blue and Ezra Griffith, eds., *Racial and Ethnic identity: Psychological Development and Creative Expression* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 32.

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Adorno's jazz essays resist the allocation of a distinct culture or music generally considered regarded as inferior to Jews or blacks. He related the efforts of disparaged children to prove themselves, with the flamboyant virtuosity of jazz musicians who were also often "outsiders." As he put it, "Against the minima of march and drawing room music, hot music stands as the maximum that can be reached — that is the whole point of it."[71] Adorno himself had excelled as a child and his school career had been accelerated by special leave of the Education Department.[72] But since it is racial exclusion that pressures black or Jewish or half-Jewish players to excel, the performance is not as free as it seems, but forced by society. It represents the primacy of society over an individual who none the less sees himself as the measure of the action."[73]

Jews and Lambert

When in 1962 Adorno republished "Über Jazz" in *Moments Musicaux*, he updated the language. He replaced *Neger* with *Farbige* (colored) when talking about Ellington. Most significantly, Adorno removed some of his references to Jews.[74] It is understandable that Adorno would not wish to imply that Jews were to blame for the Holocaust by including them in "the subject of jazz" which "permits itself to be annihilated by society in order to feel itself endorsed and vindicated by society." Adorno originally included Jews in his exploration of jazz style and the extent to which individuals may play along with their own stigmatized situation. Many ethnics admit to occasionally feeling "endorsed and vindicated" (as Adorno put it in the English summary of "Über Jazz") because they belong to the victim group rather than to the oppressing group.[75]

When anti-Semitic leaflets were distributed in Archer Street in June 1934, *Rhythm* defended British-born Jews and condemned anti-Semitism in the music business.[76] The argument for and against jazz in the British press

71. Adorno, "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 109.
72. Adorno's letter to Claughton dated July 3, 1934, in "Papers of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning," MS. SPSL, Bodleian Library, Oxford. 322/2.
73. Adorno, "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 108.
74. Rottweiler, Hektor, "Uber Jazz," 1936, *op. cit.*, p. 242 and p. 256. See also Adorno, "Zeitlose Mode. Zum Jazz," reprinted in *Prisms* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967) tr. by Sam and Shierry Weber; and Adorno, "Replik zu einer Kritik der 'Zeitlose Mode'," in *Merkur* (September 1953).
75. Rottweiler, "Uber jazz," op. cit,. p. 258. For a fuller discussion of these issues, see Adorno, *Minima Moralia, op. cit.*, e.g., p. 26 and p. 135.
76. *Rhythm* (June 1934), p. 11.

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was marked by a gratuitous anti-Semitism. Anti-Semites seemed uncertain whether jazz was a Jewish invention with which Jews were poisoning the world or whether it was something they had stolen from blacks. The portrayal of "the Jew" was always as cosmopolitan or foreign. One jazz writer in *Melody Maker*, Stanley Nelson, defended himself against charges of anti-Semitism with a typical outburst. "For I have a great many Jewish friends and I am a great admirer of the race. But — and I apologize for blotting the virgin page of this new manner (sic), many Jewish musicians are disagreeable persons who persist in a complete disregard of the basic principles of Englishry."[77] As Adorno pointed out, "Intransigent enthusiasm for blacks does not exclude outrage at Jewish uncouthness."[78] Jazz commentaries implied then, as now, that black composers such as Fats Waller were deliberately excluded by Jews as a group or forced to play music which they did not really want to play.[79] Jewish participation in jazz was dismissed and the work of Gershwin condemned as synthetic. As Adorno wrote, "Jazz and Pogrom belong together."[80] Adorno accused jazz of popularizing the stereotypical, foreign representation of Jewish music which he disliked in Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" and in Wagner. Paul Gilroy takes up the issues of hybridity and commercial exploitation in black music and makes the same complaint as Adorno about the marketing of a spurious ethnic authenticity far removed from the everyday reality of people's lives.[81]

Issues of race in jazz were connected to those of sex. The parts of Adorno's manuscript which most disturbed Horkheimer and Seiber were those where he made the allegation that the jazz beat was related to coitus.

77. *Melody Maker* (January 5, 1935), p. 2.

78. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

79. Peter Dempsey, Note to Fats Waller "Ain't Misbehavin"; 25 Greatest Hits, Living Era CD AJA. 5174. (1995).

80. Theodor W. Adorno "Oxford Nachträger to 'Über Jazz'," in *Moments Musicaux*, *op. cit.*, p. 116. He singled out "Poor Buttermilk" which Confrey had played at the celebrated Aeolian Hall jazz concert of February 12, 1924 which launched "Rhapsody in Blue."

81. Paul Gilroy writes, "To be inauthentic is, in this case at least, to be real" in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 106. For Adorno's full critique of authenticity, see his *The Jargon of Authenticity* (London and Chicago: RKP 1973), tr. by Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will. The labelling of Jews as "other" also went unchallenged in British music criticism. Constant Lambert's *Music Ho; A Study of Music in Decline* was published by Faber & Faber in 1933. The book was warmly reviewed by the *Musical Times* in June 1934 and Lambert's coverage of jazz and modernity was and still is authoritatively quoted, overlooking the passages which denigrate Jews. "Most jazz is written and performed by cosmopolitan Jews. The nostalgia of the Negro who wants to go home has given place to the infinitely more weary nostalgia of the cosmopolitan Jew who has no home to go to." p. 202. Lambert quoted at length from the French poet, Blaise Cendrars as if to gain outside authority for his anti-Semitism.

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It was natural for Adorno to address the irrationality in popular musical taste through its Freudian elements. The Oxford philosophy curiculum included lectures on psychology and Geoffrey Mure, Fellow at Adorno's college, was helping to promote it as an academic subject. While Adorno's frame of reference is outdated, today few would question the sexual component in popular music. It also seems widely accepted that in popular music, sexual attraction is largely unreal or displaced and is often directed to stars whose sexuality is ambiguous or harmless. More problematic is Adorno's comparison of black and Jewish conformity to a humiliating musical role with sexual impotence or castration.

Adorno protested that jazz had replaced the magic of the old dances with drastic references to sexual consummation. Jazz often bore blatant sexual suggestion or obscenity coded in the players' names or in the songs' words. Thus, jazz performances such as those of the part-Indian composer Sheldon Brooks were brash and sexually suggestive. According to Adorno, the petit bourgeoisie hated jazz because of its sexual components.[82] The socializing of black players at jazz night clubs provided a pretext for claims that jazz encouraged so-called "miscegenation." Sexual relations between blacks and whites were presented either as a threat to British purity or as a welcome means of assimilating blacks. Sexual epithets were transferred to cultural issues. Hybridity and bastardy became terms of abuse.

Adorno was a child of Jewish mixed marriage. His argument against jazz is mercifully free of suggestions that racial or musical purity is at risk, or even something that merits defending. It is inappropriate when discussing Adorno to deploy cultural models that see jazz as the property of any one group or as rendered inauthentic by Europeans, Jews or other non-blacks. Adorno disapproved of any association of ethnicity with culture. "Jazz is not what it is — it is what we need it for," he said.[83] From the 1930s on, it has been needed by racists to establish supposed racial distinctions and by anti-racists to oppose them. It is only a short step from claiming that only blacks can play jazz to claiming that is what they ought to be doing. Today classical music and opera is still perceived as "good" music worthy of public subsidy. Jazz is not similarly funded, nor is there any suggestion that it ought to be. In questioning black and Jewish relations to jazz, Adorno asked still unresolved central cultural questions about the relative merits of jazz and "classical" music. Sixty years later, "Über Jazz" remains a prophetic contribution to the debate on ethnicity, aesthetics and social subordination.

82. Adorno, "Über Jazz," *op. cit.*, p. 107.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

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Notes and Commentary:

Re-Reading the Unabomber Manifesto

Tim Luke

To the extent that the now infamous manifesto, "Industrial Society and Its Future," covers cultural, economic and political issues *Telos* has addressed for over a quarter century, the odd story of Ted Kaczynski and the particularities of his strategic bombing campaign against "the system" warrants reexamination.[1] Unabombs killed three and wounded twenty-three others in a string of sixteen bombings from 1978 to 1995. Many of the victims, however, were individuals not usually associated with targets of terrorist activities: comparatively poor, obscure, or powerless academics whom the Unabomber saw as the key personnel supporting the operators of "the system."

Immediately following Kaczynski's arrest, *Newsweek* pointed out his "essentially "left-wing orientation"[2] and placed him in a line of famous American oddballs who, beginning with Thoreau, often take up "a grubby, lonely existence in one of the most rugged regions of the North American outback." In the case of the

1. David Kaczynski turned his brother, Ted, over to authorities after noting some disturbing parallels in Ted's personal letters, which espoused radical antiestablishment positions, and the manifesto published in *The Washington Post* (September 19, 1995). Because he was not caught in the act and did not confess to any of these crimes, Kaczynski's prosecution rests exclusively on forensic and circumstantial evidence. See *The Washington Post* (June 22, 1996), A3. The "Unabomber" tag is a product of the FBI's investigation, which described the elusive bomber by his attacks on universities (un) and airlines (a) as "Unabombs" from "the Unabomber." Nonetheless, government press releases to the media indicate that Kaczynski's small cabin in the Montana woods has yielded a considerable cache of potentially damaging evidence. The Justice Department also alleges it found lists of actual and potential bombing victims, as well as a secret numerical code used by the Unabomber to verify his identity in communicating with authorities. Kaczynski's DNA — as detected from saliva testing — apparently correlates positively with traces extracted from the postage stamps affixed to mail bombs dating back to 1978. Additionally, observers at hotels, restaurants and bus terminals have put Kaczynski in or around Sacramento, California, a location frequently used to post the bomb packages, when mail bombs were either mailed or detonated. See *The New York Times* (June 16, 1996), A12.

2. Joe Klein, "The Unabomber and the Left," in *Newsweek* (April 22, 1996), p. 39.

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Unabomber, this pattern of life suggests such a profound alienation that "it makes Thoreau, with his two-year sabbatical at Walden Pond, look like a social butterfly."[3] Kirkpatrick Sale, by contrast, saw the Unabomber's activities as those of "a rational and serious man, deeply committed to his cause, who has given a great deal of thought to his work and a great deal of time to his expression of it."[4] And, of course, analyses indulging in psycho-babble were not lacking. Thus, Maggie Scharf claimed that "the diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder seems to be the most illuminating explanation of the Unabomber's seemingly incomprehensible behavior." Allegedly, Kaczynsky is "deeply injured at the core and suffering from sorely depleted supplies to self-esteem . . . with a sense of inner emptiness and painful feelings of unworthiness, despair and desolation."[5] Whether or not Kaczynski is mad or reasonable, narcissistic or selfless, evil or virtuous is not particularly interesting. More relevant are the relations between Kaczynski's life, his reputed manifesto, and the whole cultural context from which they emerged.

While the Unabomber manifesto is a flawed document, crudely reducing a complex society to "the system," it contains interesting insights. There are no signs that the Unabomber followed any of the *Telos* debates over the years, or pitched his arguments to today's burgeoning populist movements. A quick survey of the footnotes suggests that its author did not have access to materials much more sophisticated than what one might find in second-hand book shops or a public library in small western towns. Not unlike Paul and Percival Goodman's *Communitas* and their analysis of how "the means of livelihood" structure "ways of life," the Unabomber's violent destruction of those "man-made things" of "engineering and architecture" that are "the heaviest and biggest part of what we experience"[6] indicates that he recognizes how freedom is constrained by the categorical imperatives embedded in ordinary things.

Written in a disorganized series of short numbered paragraphs and running some 35,000 words in length, the Unabomber's manifesto begins with radical sentiments that many have shared for nearly 200 years: "The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race," inasmuch as what is identified as the workings of "the industrial system" have "destabilized society, have

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3. *Newsweek* (April 15, 1996), pp. 32-33.

4. In his eagerness to promote his then forthcoming book on the Luddites, Sale wrote that "the Unabomber stands in a long-line of anti-technology critics" who share a great many views with himself as well as "a number of people today who might be called neo-Luddites — Jerry Mander, Chellis Glenndinning, Jeremy Rifkin, Bill McKibben, Wendell Berry, Dave Foreman, Langdon Winner, Stephenie Mills and John Zerzan among them." See Kirkpatrick Sale, "Is There a Method in His Madness?" in *The Nation*, 261, No. 9 (September 25, 1995), p. 311.

5. Maggie Scharf, "The Mind of the Unabomber," in *The New Republic* 214 (June 10, 1996: 20-23), p. 22.

6. Paul and Percival Goodman, *Communitas: Means of Livelihood and Ways of Life* (New York: Vintage, 1960), p. 3.

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made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World to physical suffering as well) and have inflicted severe damage on the natural world" (¶1).[7] The essay outlines a vision of "what must be done," allegedly from the perspective of a burnt-out ex-academic living in Montana's backwoods. Because of this predicament, the bombings became a ploy to capture public attention.[8] But how lasting was this impression? The Unabomber killed 3 people in the course of 17 years, and the message in his manifesto was mostly tossed away with the rest of the September 19, 1995 newspaper.

The Unabomber concedes that the manifesto is not comprehensive: it examines "only some of the negative developments that have grown out of the industrial system" — particularly those that "have received insufficient public attention or in which we have something new to say" (¶5). What he believes has received inadequate attention, or to be "new," are attempts to register how and why technology as "a means of livelihood" deprives people of their dignity and autonomy, while imposing a sense of inferiority and powerlessness. While this may be dismissed as another exercise in red-green confusion along the lines of Sale's "New Luddites,"[9] there is more here than this superficial critique lets on.[10] The Unabomber's belief that technology increases life-expectancy and everyday ease as it decreases life-enjoyment and freedom parallels Marcuse's reading of technology.[11]

What has garnered too little attention is the deadening impact of capital, research, and technology in market-mediated choices — how an allegedly emancipatory technology can, even within capitalist liberal-democratic regimes, result in a rational totalitarian order. The Unabomber approaches this question in several ways, but the concept of "oversocialization" captures much of his distaste. He sees human dignity and freedom bleeding away into pre-processed modes of

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7. All subsequent citations from the manifesto will be to the paragraphs in the published text, rather than to particular page numbers.

8. If the Unabomber had not committed any terroristic acts, he reasons, "and had submitted the writings to a publisher, they probably would not have been published." In order to get the message "before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people"(¶96).

9. See Steven Marcus, "Rage Against the Machine: The New Luddites, the Old Luddites, and Some Very Bad History," in *The New Republic* 214 (June 10, 1996), pp. 30-38.

10. See Kirkpatrick Sale, *Rebels Against the Future: The Luddites and their War on the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1996), pp. 261-279.

11. According to Marcuse, the daily mechanism of the industrial system "provides the great rationalization of the unfreedom of man and demonstrates the 'technical' impossibility of being autonomous, of determining one's own life. This unfreedom appears neither irrational nor as political, but rather as submission to the technical apparatus which enlarges the comforts of life and increases the productivity of labor." While technology/industry/business pose as mediations of cultural liberation and humanitarian progress, they also generate "the legitimacy of domination" that opens out upon "a rationally totalitarian society." See Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. xvi.

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subjectivity: "We are socialized to conform to many norms of behavior that do not fall under the headings of morality. Thus the oversocialized person is kept on a psychological leash and spends his life running on rails that society has laid down for him. In many over socialized people this results in a sense of constraint and powerlessness that can be a severe hardship" (¶26). Ironically, he sees this condition afflicting leftists even more acutely than most people, because the prevailing blocs of power and wealth limit modern leftism mostly to acting out its resistance as artificial negativity with no relation to actual revolution (¶26-30).[12]

To compensate for lost power, the system not only provides for but also endorses "surrogate activities" that industrial peoples "set up for themselves merely in order to have some goal to work toward . . . for the sake of the 'fulfillment' that they get from pursuing the goal" (¶39). Because "only minimal effort is necessary to satisfy one's physical needs," (¶39) most of what preoccupies anyone is a surrogate: art, science, athletics, literature as well as acquiring money, participation in corporatism, engaging in social activism, and pursuing celebrity. These surrogates are are "less satisfying than the pursuit of real goals . . . one indication of this is the fact that, in many or most cases, people who are deeply involved in surrogate activities are never satisfied, never at rest" (¶41). The Unabomber states that "the effort needed to satisfy biological needs does not occur AUTONOMOUSLY, but by functioning as parts of an immense social machine" (¶41). When meeting real needs takes only trivial effort, and satisfying surrogate desires is given such latitude, the stage is set for individual marginalization on many interrelated levels. Thus a very fine line divides "Sensible Sam the Smart Consumer" from "Crazy Kaczynski the Alleged Founder of the Freedom Club."

The Unabomber's interpretation again parallels Marcuse's account of technology as "instruments of social and political control," because all individuals' sense of their current needs takes place through the scientific organization of labor and leisure, "which operate beyond and outside the work process and condition the individuals in accord with the dominant social interests."[13] Autonomy under these conditions is difficult to attain because the individual's power is preempted by the highly rationalized social regime, which also, in turn, redefines rationality to suit the profit targets of its "merchants of desire."[14] As Marcuse

12. As the Unabomber observes, "the system couldn't care less what kind of music a man listens to, what kind of clothes he wears or what religion he believes in as long as he studies in school, holds a respectable job, climbs the status ladder, is a 'responsible' parent, is nonviolent and so forth"(¶29). Conceding that his analysis is very rough, he argues that the rational totalitarianism represented by oversocialization causes "low self-esteem, depressive tendencies, and defeatism," because this regime "tries to socialize us to a greater extent than any previous society"(¶32).

13. Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis* (New York: Vintage, 1961), p. xii.

14. William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon, 1993).

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notes, "the apparatus to which the individual is to adjust and adapt himself is so rational that individual protests and liberation appear not only hopeless but as utterly irrational. The system of life created by modern industry is defined in terms of expediency, convenience and efficiency. . . . Rational behavior becomes identical with a matter-of-factness which teaches reasonable submissiveness and thus guarantees getting along with the prevailing order."[15]

Even though his resistance was futile, and perhaps irrational, Kaczynski acted against expediency, convenience, and efficiency in a life that would seem sociopathic even before he was indicted as the Unabomber. To live normally for him would have further interdicted his already tenuous freedom. As he emphasizes, this question of autonomy is decisive: "For most people it is through the power process — having a goal, making an AUTONOMOUS effort and attaining the goal — that self-esteem, self-confidence and a sense of power are acquired" (¶44). Industrial society destroys these conditions for autonomous action by embedding people in weak, unfree roles in every amorphous aspect of market-mediated social reproduction. This is why this system is in crisis and has to be destroyed by a popular revolution: "when one does not have adequate opportunity to go through the power process the consequences are (depending on the individual and on the way the power process is disrupted) boredom, demoralization, low self-esteem, inferiority feelings, defeatism, depression, anxiety, guilt, frustration, hostility, spouse or child abuse, insatiable hedonism, abnormal sexual behavior, sleep disorders, eating disorders, etc." (¶44).

To crush the regime of oversocialization and revitalize the power process, the Unabomber touts the merits of violent revolt, which are seemingly assumed to work as billed. His obviously poor sense of unintended consequences, however, pops up in this celebration of revolution, which must be "immediate" (¶166), "total" (¶179), "ecocentric" (¶183), "technoscientific" (¶193), "global" (¶195), and "communitarian" (¶199). The preservation of wild nature and individual autonomy depend on dismantling "the system." Yet, with complete naiveté, he somehow believes that his revolutionary program is antithetical to the visions of the future espoused by those technocrats, leftists or politicians who keep the present system running so smoothly. In positing that "the single overriding goal must be the elimination of modern technology, and that no other goal [social justice, material equality, popular participation] can be allowed to compete with this one" (¶205), he argues everything else should be examined through an open-ended "empirical approach" (¶206). Not seeing how his revolutionary analysis mimics the industrial system's elitist managerialism, the Unabomber merely reasserts the enlightened self-empowerment co-opted by the captains of industry, inventors of tomorrow, or scions of commerce. In accord with the Enlightenment schema, he asserts "history is made by active, determined minorities, not by the majority,

15. Herbert Marcuse, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences*, 9 (1941), p. 421.

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which seldom has a clear and consistent idea of what it really wants" (¶189). Therefore, the coming revolution will follow an ideology written in two versions: one "more sophisticated should address itself to people who are intelligent, thoughtful and rational" (¶187), the other "should be propagated in a simplified form that will enable the unthinking majority to see the conflict of technology vs. nature in unambiguous terms" (¶188).

The revolutionaries of the Unabomber's Freedom Club must follow the classic Bolshevik strategy of energizing committed radicals and sensitizing the uninformed masses to ready themselves to coproduce their inevitable future under a visionary vanguard's lead: "until the time comes for the final push toward revolution, the task of revolutionaries will be less to win the shallow support of the majority than to build a small core of deeply committed people. As for the majority, it will be enough to make them aware of the existence of the new ideology and remind them of it frequently; though of course it will be desirable to get majority support to the extent that this can be done without weakening the core of seriously committed people" (¶189). This peculiar vision of the transition is decisively negative: "we have no illusions about the feasibility of creating a new, ideal form of society. Our goal is only to destroy the existing form of society" (¶182). The possibility that there are such big majorities of people to mobilize only because of how technological society works seems to elude the Unabomber's allegedly intelligent, thoughtful, rational elite.

Of course, Kaczynski does not buy into the redistributive millenarianism of 19th century socialism. He warns against "leftists of the most power-hungry type" (¶217), because ultimately "leftism is a totalitarian force" (¶219) "characterized by arrogance or a dogmatic approach to ideology" (¶230). Therefore, social justice as a revolutionary goal is forbidden because it tends to attract leftist do-gooders with power-hungry arrogance. It would compel revolutionaries to preserve large-scale, organization-dependent technology, and would dilute the ecocentric focus of the revolution. In short, "it must not be allowed to interfere with the effort to get rid of the technological system" (¶201). Despite efforts to anticipate the possible consequences of mounting a revolution whose "focus will be on technology and economics, not politics" (¶193), there are no guarantees that this blow against technological progress would not self-destruct. In many ways, the Unabomber only seems committed to replacing technocratic new class managers with small groups of green leaders, who would rule by wise ecological fiat. What guarantees are there in his designs that anti-systemic ecological technophobes, like the industrial system's technocrats, would not lead "all on an utterly reckless ride into the unknown" (¶180)?

The Unabomber embeds his critique in a fateful choice between two kinds of technology: "Small-scale technology and organization-dependent technology" (¶208). Pursuing a line of attack that basically concludes by celebrating the collapse of Rome and the rise of medieval feudalism, he observes that the Roman empire's

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organization-dependent technology (roads, aqueducts, urban sanitation, large buildings) did regress as the empire collapsed, while its small-scale technology survived in many households and villages. Since "small-scale technology is technology that can be used by small-scale communities without outside assistance" (¶208), it must play a major role in any post-revolutionary scenario. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, "primitive INDIVIDUALS and SMALL GROUPS actually had considerable power over nature; or maybe it would be better to say power WITHIN nature" (¶198). Therefore, "one should argue that the power of the INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM should be broken, and that this will INCREASE the power and freedom of INDIVIDUALS and SMALL GROUPS" (¶199).

Following the Goodmans, Marcuse, or Mumford, the nub of the Unabomber's protest is found in these questions: how does complex technology, defined as large-scale or organization-dependent, determine life by eliminating freedom and substituting empty surrogate activities for personal power? What must be done to escape the destructive consequences — on an individual, social or global level — of this industrial system? The destruction of the system depends on the disruption of the system's propagation of empty surrogates or false needs. If the mechanisms of such organizational dependence could be broken down by violent revolution, terrorism, or popular disinterest, then the networks needed for operating them "would quickly be lost" (¶210). As the Unabomber articulates this possibility, he anticipates the necessary advent of a new "dark age," arguing that: "once this technology had been lost for a generation or so it would take centuries to rebuild it, just as it took centuries to build it the first time around. Surviving technical books would be few and scattered. As industrial society, if built from scratch, without outside help, can only be built in a series of stages. You need tools to make tools. . . . A long process of economic development and progress in social organization is required. And, even in the absence of an ideology opposed to technology, there is no reason to believe that anyone would be interested in rebuilding industrial society" (¶210).

Organization is where power actually ebbs and flows rather than in technology or the state or any individual alone. According to the Unabomber, all people need power; it is what defines autonomous human beings. However, the industrial revolution was about the concentration of power in abstract social machines. As a result, these industrial megamachines are where power for a few persists as powerlessness for everyone else. "Modern man as a collective entity, that is — the industrial system — has immense power over nature" (¶197). But, even more evil is the fact that "modern INDIVIDUALS AND SMALL GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS have far less power than primitive man ever did," because "the vast power of 'modern man' over nature is exercised not by individuals or small groups but by large organizations" (¶197). For an individual to wield the power of technology, it occurs only "under the supervision and control of the system" as "you need a license for everything and with the license come

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rules and regulations," so the individual has *only* "the technological powers with which the system chooses to provide him" (¶198).

Here too is the source of an intriguing level of operational survivability in organization-dependent technology; its codes of authority, legitimacy or use are embedded in the artifacts needed for its application. Consequently, the Unabomber is unequivocal about his immediate revolutionary program: "Until the industrial system has been thoroughly wrecked, the destruction of that system must be the revolutionaries' ONLY goal . . . if the revolutionaries permit themselves to have any other goal than the destruction of technology, they will be tempted to use technology as a tool for reaching that other goal. If they give in to that temptation, they will fall right back into the technological trap, because modern technology is a unified, tightly organized system, so that in order to retain SOME technology, one finds oneself obliged to retain MOST technology, here one ends up sacrificing only token amounts of technology . . . never forget that the human race with technology is like an alcoholic with a barrel of wine" (¶200, 203). Fortunately for the Freedom Club, this tendency toward breakdown is already occurring on a global scale due to the excesses and inherent flaws in the large-scale disorder of organization-dependent industrial systems. When all is said and done, "the industrial system will not break down purely as a result of revolutionary action," because its vulnerabilities are a product of the regime evolving such that "it is already in enough trouble so that there would be a good chance of its eventually breaking down by itself anyway" (¶167).

Beyond the more obvious difficulties of constructing an anti-technological revolution, the Unabomber employs a simplistic construction of "nature" as the fount of indisputable objective reason that revolutionists should contrapose to the sullied irrationalities of technology. While his references suggest he has not perused the works of Arne Naess, Bill Devall or George Sessions, this reading of "nature" is straight out of deep ecology. With no sense of irony, the Unabomber asserts that "the positive ideal that we propose is Nature" (¶183), and "it is not necessary for the sake of nature to set up some chimerical utopia or any new kind of social order" (¶184). This might be true, but could not nature itself, particularly when constructed along such deep ecological lines, become a new kind of social order for some chimerical utopia?

The Unabomber's categories of nature basically play ineffectually with Lukács' two senses of nature.[16] "First nature," or "WILD nature; those aspects of the functioning of the Earth and its living things that are independent of human management and free of human interference and control" (¶183), is set up against technology as "second nature," or "an immense social machine" (¶41) composed of "technology that depends on large-scale social organization" (¶208). Human nature is the battleground between first and second nature, because "with wild

16. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 83-110.

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nature we include human nature, by which we mean those aspects of the functioning of the human individual that are not subject to regulation by organized society but are products of chance, or free will, or God" (¶183). Destroy second nature, and first nature will be redeemed and reclaimed, allowing human nature to flourish amidst its tests of authentic power processes in the wild, not with artificial surrogate activities. In addition to healing the scars left on nature by the industrial revolution, "getting rid of industrial society will accomplish a great deal . . . it will remove the capacity of organized society to keep increasing its control over nature (including human nature) . . . it is certain most people will live close to nature, because in the absence of advanced technology there is no other way that people can live. To feed themselves they must be peasants or herdsmen or fishermen or hunters, etc. . . . local autonomy should tend to increase, because lack of advanced technology and rapid communications will limit the capacity of governments or other large organizations to control local communities" (¶184).

These radical interpretations of nature, however, are no less artificial or no more certain than the positive ideologies of technology the Unabomber opposes.[17] Instead, he simply conventionalizes a series of fashionable ecocentric assumptions about nature, and transforms them into constant timeless truths, like so many others who naively sign on to the good ship "deep ecology" without thinking about where its admirals might sail them. On this account, Klein's dismissal of the Unabomber for his "essential left-wing orientation" is laughable.[18] The Unabomber's contempt for modern leftism seconds deep ecology's criticisms of modern socialism's trust in big science, complex technology, and vast organizations to create limitless material abundance. Nonetheless, his commitment to "wild nature" does not lead all the way into a biocentric Gaia worship; indeed, he razzes such ecospiritualist devotions as frivolous play-acting, even though he admits that nature often inspires quasi-religious reverence.

Rather than singing from Marxist hymnals, the Unabomber merely recycles questionable assumptions cribbed from primers on wild nature philosophies: nature is the opposite of technology, nature is beautiful, nature is popular, radical environments must exalt nature and oppose technology, nature takes care of itself, nature is a spontaneous creation, humans once coexisted with nature without doing any damage to it, only industrial societies really devastate nature (¶184). Most, if not all of these points cannot be defended because they are by-products of skewed misinterpretations. Yet, within this utopia, the Unabomber draws his certitudes for a new social order constrained materially by this prime directive: nature's attributes make it necessary to destroy technology so that small groups of autonomous individuals can coexist with it in ways that do not devastate nature, and thereby let it take care of itself. Clearly, this image is appealing, but it also necessitates the destruction of a global web of interrelated,

17. Tim Luke, "Community and Ecology," in *Telos*, 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 69-79.
18. Joe Klein, "The Unabomber and the Left," *op. cit.*, p. 39

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complex organization-dependent technologies that provide a vital habitat for billions of people. Without such technologies, nature will take care of itself, and let these immense populations die to the extent that their members cannot live autonomously like primitive man, or "find and prepare edible roots . . . track game and take it with homemade weapons . . . protect himself from heat, cold, rain, dangerous animals, etc." (¶198).

Maybe Kaczynski began to approach this ecological ideal in Montana, but unlike primitive man he also received a money allowance from his aged mother and perplexed brother. Many of his tools (a bicycle, his shack, the typewriters, various explosives, etc.) were also artifacts salvaged from industrial society. Moreover, mail-bombing computer store owners, timber industry lobbyists, or research university professors will not contribute to the collapse of a vast social machine that sustains billions of human beings. Living autonomously in small groups might turn out well on the level of Rousseau's noble savages, but it also could turn sour on the scale of the Road Warrior's ceaseless quest for petrol.

Basically, the Unabomber's manifesto is an essay on the origins of inhumanity, inequality, and insensitivity. The compounding of architecture/engineering/utility/transportation/communication infrastructures with natural environments are now such circumambient constraints on human beings that second nature is actively selecting autonomy, power processes, and small group intimacy out of the human species.[19] The industrial system is not animated by conventional political ideologies, "but by technical necessity" (¶119). The survival of mechanical networks of human and inhuman actors in these vast arcologies rob once free individuals of their autonomy and power,[20] because the individual's fate now "MUST depend on decisions that he personally cannot influence to any great extent. . . . Because production depends on the cooperation of very large numbers of people" (¶117). These biopowered populations accept their daily disciplinary directives. Plainly, the autonomy of local communities disappears as these formations "become more enmeshed with and dependent on large-scale systems like public utilities, computer networks, highway systems, the mass communications media, the modern health care system" as it becomes more obvious "that technology applied in one location often affects people at other locations far away" (¶118).

Here the Unabomber grasps a key populist complaint: the colonization of everyday life by industrial society is becoming virtually irresistible and irreversible as New Class symbolic analysts rob everyone of their autonomous power potential.[21] Inasmuch as each new technical device appears to advance life in a desirable fashion, technological systems "as a WHOLE narrow our sphere of

19. Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1970).

20. Tim Luke, "The Politics of Arcological Utopia," in *Telos* 101 (Fall 1994), pp. 55-78.

21. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (London: Harvester Wheatsleaf, 1993).

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freedom" (¶128) and success in resisting it "can be hoped for only by fighting the technological system as a whole; but that is revolution, not reform" (¶130). The Unabomber sees reform as the existing regime's most false promise, that all efforts to make any room for "a sense of purpose and for autonomy within the system are no better than a joke" (¶120). Reformers ask how personal freedom and small group autonomy might be mixed with the benefits of high technology. The needs of the technical order, however, will eventually overrule any true efforts to make reforms as the system's demands impose inhumane consequences.[22] Ultimately, the existing order works much better without the uncertainties or lack of focus humane values would introduce into its operations. As the Unabomber fears, "it is NOT in the interest of the system to preserve freedom or small-group autonomy. On the contrary, it is in the interest of the system to bring human behavior under control to the greatest possible extent" (¶139).

At one level, Kaczynski's reading of technology and industrial society might be interpreted as a crude misinterpretation of Marcuse's "great refusal," being carried on as a real revolution by a true "outsider." Indeed, his rehash of Cal-Berkeley activists assailing "the system" at times sounds like the 1968 *Zeitgeist* echoing back from the Montana Rockies. Fearing absorption by modern technological civilization, Kaczynski simply dropped out, refusing to cooperate with most of the high technology systems that have transformed everyday life since the 1880s. Living in a ten by twelve foot shack with no indoor plumbing, electricity, telephone connection, gas, or municipal services, he eked out an intentionally frugal existence, his level of technological sophistication not exceeding 1896. A woodstove for heat, a bicycle for transport, game animals for food, a manual typewriter for communication, and local library books for entertainment, the Unabomber appears to have met his "single overriding goal . . . the elimination of modern technology" (¶7) in his own daily existence. Yet, few would forsake their surrogate activities in today's world and the ultimate convenience of modern living to accept growing and eating their own turnips outside a shack in the woods as their version of an authentic power process.

One need not condone what Kaczynski has done to comprehend the logic of his actions. As marginalized as he was throughout his own life, much of what he did after leaving Berkeley in 1968 amounts to a one-man resistance movement. In a society that celebrates group conformity on the job and at home, he militantly chose a strictly feral existence. He does not claim that the end of industrial society is near; indeed, it can persist for many more decades simply racking up greater levels of ecological destruction and social anomie. Industrial society has a future, albeit a bleak one that offers solitary, nasty, brutish, and short lives. So Kaczynski attempted to capitalize on its bleakness to leverage a revolution among subjects who can still act and think on their own.

22. Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York: Norton, 1995).

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The conditions of association which bring human beings into coexistence with machines are rarely, if ever, discussed. The Unabomber's manifesto focuses on this concern. Just as Gramsci asked how "Fordism" combined capital, technology, labor, markets and culture in a determinate new social assembly line — "Americanism"[23] — so too does the Unabomber ask how this industrial system is forging a new psycho-physical nexus for power, science, freedom, and organization that is dehumanizing, disempowering, and decommunalizing everyday life. The answer he provides — technical necessity or organizational momentum — is not always all-inclusive. Other forces also structure the conditions of association. But because the Unabomber is so averse to "modern leftism," he neglects such additional factors as market rationality, class bias, ideological expectations or bureaucratic imperatives in his examination of how collectives of people and machines actually become associated.

Telos has considered these questions in the past, and it continues its lines of investigation into the present.[24] In many ways, the phenomenon of populism is the political problematic that most directly focuses on questions of "who, whom" in organization-dependent, large-scale technology. Believing that new associations of autonomous individuals on a more than local, but less than national level can work as viable alternatives to the surrogacies of industrial democracy, militarized nationalism, and personal consumption within the industrial system of developed nation-states, populists — old and new — advance their visions for alternative conditions of associating ordinary people with new arrangements of machines, which would accentuate personal competencies, familial cohesion, and communal ecologies. These modes of forging technical collectives also could stand against industrial society and for sane environmental practices, but they do not stand for going "back to the future" to revitalize the power process with neolithic hunting-and-gathering lifestyles.

In fact, even the Unabomber admits that power processes in societies as developed as those of 19th century America most likely were quite satisfying (¶56-57). Hence, there may be no need to eradicate those forms of industrial metabolism simply to abolish the hypertrophied disorder of corporate consumerism and warfare/welfare statism as it has evolved since the 1880s. Myths of living in/for "wild nature" cannot eliminate the docile domination of existing arcologies' second nature; instead, its organization-dependent, large-scale systems with all of their surrogate activities and technological controls need to be transformed from within to create workable populist communities. What is amiss here is not technologies which create domination, but rather inhumane

23. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International, 1971), pp. 272-318.

24. See *Telos* 103 (Spring 1995): Paul Piccone, "Postmodern Populism," pp. 45-86; Tim Luke, "Postmodern Populism and Ecology," pp. 87-110; and Emory Roe, "Critical Theory, Sustainable Development and Populism," pp. 149-165.

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systems of corporate control and statist domination that misinform and disorganize technologies. Populist thinkers such as Lasch or Lovins have attempted to disembed these insights from their current conditions of inarticulation and to derive answers from knowledge available in their own communities, economies, and technologies.[25] Because of these face-to-face or small group modes of economic interaction, even the Unabomber could envision frontier societies in 19th century America as ones in which the power process worked well: "the 19th century frontiersman had the sense (also largely justified) that he created change himself, by his own choice. Thus a pioneer settled on a piece of land of his own choosing and made into a farm through his own effort . . . participated as a member of a relatively small group in the creation of a new, ordered community . . . it satisfied the pioneer's need for the power process" (¶57). Bearing in mind the associated but unaddressed questions of dispossessing Mexican and Native American communities in the process, as a result, "19th century American society had an optimistic and self-confident tone, quite unlike today's society" (¶56). These are the traces America's 19th century populists struggled to keep, and what contemporary populists aspire to regain.

Real autonomy for the Unabomber comes from broadening human freedom. By "freedom," he means "the opportunity to go through the power process, with real rather than artificial goals of surrogate activities, and without interference, manipulation or supervision from anyone, especially from any large organization" (¶93). Reiterating *Telos'* articulation of the authentic message of populism, "freedom means being in control (either as an individual or as a member of a SMALL group) of the life-and-death issues of one's existence; food, clothing, shelter and defense against whatever threats there may be in one's environment" (¶93). Freedom is not the meaningless freedom of consumer choice. It means, rather, "having power; not the power to control other people but the power to control the circumstances of one's own life," because as most savvy populists observe with regard to big business and big government "one does not have freedom if anyone else (especially a large organization) has power over one, no matter how benevolently, tolerantly and permissively that power may be exercised" (¶93). The "freedom to choose," as celebrated in advertising, is merely "an element of a social machine and has only a certain set of prescribed and delimited freedoms; freedoms that are designed to serve the needs of the social machine more than those of the individual" (¶97). Autonomy is more than political rights, economic discretion, or cultural liberation; it is also an ecological condition in which someone has the ability and latitude to determine the totality of their material interconnections in both nature and society.

Despite the Unabomber's celebration of 19th century simplicities, his

25. Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: Norton, 1991); and Amory B. Lovins, *Soft Energy Paths: Toward a Durable Peace* (San Francisco: Ballinger, 1977).

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remarkably bleak reading of industrial society suggests no appreciation for the communities of that time. While many of his insights parallel those of populism, his lack of any grounding in community life are reflected in his angry loner analyses of the power process. In the wastelands of postwar suburbia, the Cold War research university and backwoods Montana, Kaczynski missed the rootedness and direction provided by close cooperative and conflictual community life. It is not too surprising, therefore, that the Unabomber manifesto calls for a return to small groups of humans struggling with nature red-in-tooth-and-claw to revitalize feelings of individual identity, authentic autonomy or close community. Populism must be integrated within the community life of those groups seeking to create workable conditions for their cultural, economic and political freedom. Most importantly, these groups need a much keener sense of culture than the narrow, almost crabbed sociological aberration of culture permeating the manifesto. Without the cultural particularity of an aesthetics or ethics grounded in stable communities, populism makes no sense. Culture is much more than "leftist psychology" or "surrogate activities in the industrial-technological system." Seeing culture, as the Unabomber does, only as the conduits of oversocialized bondage washes away all of the exciting contradictions and cross-purposes of living communities.

Kaczynski never led a "normal life," and his personal experiences with the system appear to have done much to aid and abet his slide into socially abnormal ways. The subtext of media reporting on these tendencies is that his own arrogance and intelligence got in the way of "fitting in," so he opted out, and finally decided to strike back. This is Kaczynski's key point: the routines of existing society are the heart of its inhumane reproduction. Strike at them successfully, and destabilization of everything in industrial society will be realized. His life seems to have been one of scholarly promise, followed by a consciously embraced internal exile. Yet, his manifesto makes so many valid criticisms against industrial society that it cannot be ignored. Simply dismissing this philosophical statement with all of its flaws as a demented screed from a wacko ex-professor who turned to terrorism and a hermit's life to cope with his failures as a human being, which has been the mass media's recurring spin on Kaczynski since his arrest on April 3, 1996, dodges all of the interesting issues of this sad affair.

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Small is Beautiful and Efficient: The Case For Secession

Hans-Hermann Hoppe

A state is a territorial monopoly of compulsion — an agency which may engage in continual, institutionalized expropriation of property and the exploitation — in the form of taxation and regulation — of private property owners.[1] Assuming no more than self-interest on the part of government agents, all states can be expected to exhibit a tendency toward increased exploitation. On the one hand, this means increased domestic exploitation (and internal taxation); on the other, it means territorial expansion. States will always try to enlarge their exploitation and tax base. In doing so, however, they will come into conflict with other, competing states. The competition between states *qua* territorial monopolies of compulsion is by its very nature an eliminative competition (i.e., there can be only one monopolist of exploitation and taxation in any given area). Thus, the competition between different states can be expected to promote a tendency toward increased political centralization and ultimately one single world state.

A glance at Western history suffices to illustrate the validity of this conclusion. Thus, at the beginning of this millennium, Europe consisted of numerous independent political units. Now, only a few such units remain. To be sure, decentralizing forces also existed. There was the progressive disintegration of the Ottoman Empire from the 16th century until after WWI and the establishment of modern Turkey. The Habsburg Empire was gradually dismembered from the time of its greatest expansion under Charles V until it disappeared and modern Austria was founded in 1918. And only recently has the former Soviet Empire disintegrated. There are now more than a dozen independent states on the territory of the former Soviet Union. The former Yugoslavia consists now of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, and Bosnia. And the Czechs and the Slovaks have split and formed independent countries. However, the overriding tendency was in the opposite

1. On the theory of the state, see Murray N. Rothbard, *For A New Liberty* (New York: Macmillan, 1978); *The Ethics of Liberty* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1982); *Power and Market* (Kansas City: Sheed, Andrews & McMeel, 1977); Hans-Hermann Hoppe, *Eigentum, Anarchie und Staat* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1987); *A Theory of Socialism and Capitalism* (Boston: Kluwer, 1989); *The Economics and Ethics of Private Property* (Boston: Kluwer, 1993); also Albert J. Nock, *Our Enemy the State* (Delevan: Hallberg Publishing, 1983); Franz Oppenheimer *The State* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1914); *System der Soziologie*, Vol. 2, "Der Staat" (Stuttgart: G . Fischer, 1964).

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direction. For instance, during the second half of the 17th century, Germany consisted of some 234 countries, 51 free cities, and 1500 independent knightly manors. By the early 19th century, the total number of the three had fallen to below 50, and by 1871 unification had been achieved. The ssame happened in Italy. Even small states have a history of expansion and centralization. Switzerland began in 1291 as a confederation of three independent cantonal states. By 1848 it was a single federal state with some two dozen cantonal provinces.

Moreover, from a global perspective, mankind has come closer than ever before to the establishment of a world government. Even before the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, the US had attained hegemony over Western Europe (most notably over West Germany) and the Pacific rim countries (most notably over Japan) — as indicated by the presence of American troops and military bases, by the NATO and SEATO pacts, by the role of the American dollar as the ultimate international reserve currency and of the US Federal Reserve System as the "lender" or "liquidity provider" of last resort for the entire Western banking system, and by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the recently established World Trade Organization (WTO). In addition, under American hegemony the political integration of Western Europe has steadily advanced. With the establishment of a European Central Bank and a European Currency Unit (ECU), the European Community will likely be complete before the turn of the century. At the same time, with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) a significant step toward the political integration of the American continent has been taken. In the absence of the Soviet Empire and its military threat, the US has emerged as the world's sole and undisputed military superpower and its "top cop."

According to the orthodox view, centralization is generally desirable and progressive movement, whereas disintegration and secession, even if sometimes unavoidable, represent an anachronism. It is assumed that larger political units — and ultimately a single world government — imply wider markets and hence increased wealth. As evidence of this, it is pointed out that economic prosperity has increased dramatically with increased centralization. However, rather than reflecting any truth, this orthodox view illustrates the fact that history is typically written by its winners. Correlation or temporal coincidence do not prove causation. In fact, the relation between economic prosperity and centralization is very different from and indeed almost the opposite of what the orthodoxy alleges.[2]

Political integration (centralization) and economic (market) integration are two completely different phenomena. Political integration involves the territorial expansion of a state's power of taxation and property regulation (expropriation).

2. On the political economy of centralization and decentralization, see Jean Baechler, *The Origins of Capitalism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), esp. ch. 7; and Hans-Hermann Hoppe, "Migrazione, Centralismo e Secessione nell' Europa Contemporanea," in *Biblioteca Della Libertà,* no.118 (1992).

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Economic integration is the extension of the interpersonal and interregional division of labor and market participation. In principle, in taxing and regulating private property owners and market income earners, all governments are counterproductive. They *reduce* market participation and the formation of economic wealth. Once the existence of a government has been assumed, however, there is no direct relation between territorial size and economic integration. Switzerland and Albania are both small countries, but Switzerland exhibits a high degree of economic integration, whereas Albania does not. Both the US and the former Soviet Union are large. Yet while there is much division of labor and market participation in the US, in the Soviet Union, where there was virtually no private capital ownership, there was hardly any economic integration. Centralization, then, can go hand in hand with either economic progress or retrogression. There are improvements whenever a less taxing and regulating government expands its territory at the expense of a more exploitative one. If the reverse occurs, centralization implies economic disintegration and retrogression.

Yet there is a very important indirect relation between size and economic integration. A central government ruling over a large territories — much less a single world government — cannot come into being *ab ovo.* Instead, all institutions with the power to tax and regulate private owners must start out small. Smallness, however, contributes to moderation. A small government has many competitors,[3] and if it taxes and regulates its own subjects more than its competitors, it is bound to suffer from the emigration of labor and capital and a corresponding loss of future tax revenue. Consider a single household, or a village, as an independent territory. Could a father do to his son, or a mayor to his village, what the government of the Soviet Union did to its subjects (i.e., deny them private capital ownership) or what governments all across Western Europe and the US do to their citizens (i.e., expropriate up to 50% of their productive output)? Obviously not. There

3. Political competition is a far more effective way of limiting a government's natural desire for expansion than internal constitutional limitations. Indeed, the attempts of some public choice theorists and of "constitutional economics" to design liberal model constitutions must strike one as hopelessly naive. For constitutional courts, and supreme court judges, are part and parcel of the government apparatus whose powers they are supposed to limit.Why in the world should they want to constrain the power of the very organization that provides them with jobs, money, and prestige? To assume so is not only theoretically inconsistent (i.e., incompatible with the assumption of self-interest), it is also without any historical foundation. Despite the explicit limitation of the power of the central government contained in the 10th amendment of the US constitution, for instance, it has been the interpretation by the US Supreme Court which has rendered the amendment essentially null and void. Similarly, despite the constitutional guarantee of private property by the (West) German constitution, for instance, the German supreme court, after German reunification in 1990, declared all communist expropriations prior to the founding of the East German state in 1949 "valid." Thus, more than 50% of former East Germany's land used for agriculture was appropriated by the (West) German state (rather than being returned to the original private owners, as required by a literal interpretation of the constitution).

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would either be an immediate revolt and the government would be overthrown, or emigration to another nearby household or village would ensue.

Contrary to orthodoxy, then, it is precisely the fact that Europe possessed a highly decentralized power structure composed of countless independent political units which explains the origin of capitalism — the expansion of market participation and of economic growth — in the Western world. It is not by accident that capitalism first flourished under conditions of extreme political decentralization: in the northern Italian city states, in southern Germany, and in the secessionist Low Countries (Netherlands).

The competition among small states for taxable subjects brings them into conflict with each other. As a result of interstate conflicts, historically drawn out over the course of centuries, a few states succeed in expanding their territories, while others are eliminated or incorporated. Which states win in this process of eliminative competition depends on many factors, of course, but in the long run, the decisive factor is the relative amount of economic resources at a government's disposal. In taxing and regulating, governments do not contribute to the creation of economic wealth. Instead, they parasitically draw on existing wealth. However, they can influence the amount of existing wealth negatively. Other things being equal, the lower the tax and regulation burden imposed by a government on its domestic economy, the larger its population tends to grow (due to internal reasons as well as immigration factors), and the larger the amount of domestically produced wealth on which it can draw in its conflicts with neighboring competitors. For this reason, centralization is frequently progressive. States which tax and regulate their domestic economies little — liberal states — tend to defeat and expand their territories at the expense of non-liberal ones. This accounts for the outbreak of the "Industrial Revolution" in centralized England and France. It explains why, in the course of the 19th century, Western Europe came to dominate the rest of the world (rather than the other way around). Furthermore, it explains the rise of the US to the rank of superpower in the course of the 20th century.

However, the further the process of more liberal governments defeating less liberal ones proceeds (i.e., the larger the territories, the fewer and more distant the remaining competitors, and thus the more costly international migration), the lower a government's incentive to continue in its domestic liberalism will be. As one approaches the limit of a One World state, all possibilities of voting with one's feet against a government disappear. Wherever one goes, the same tax and regulation structure applies. Thus relieved of the problem of emigration, a fundamental rein on the expansion of governmental power is gone. This explains developments in the 20th century: with WWI, and even more so with WWII, the US attained hegemony over Western Europe and became heir to its vast colonial empires. A decisive step in the direction of global unification was taken with the establishment of a *pax Americana*. Indeed, throughout the entire period the US, Western Europe, and most of the rest of the world have suffered from a steady and

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dramatic growth of government power, taxation, and regulatory expropriation.[4]

In light of social and economic theory and history, then, a case for secession can be made. Initially, secession is nothing more than a shifting of control over the nationalized wealth from a larger, central government to a smaller, regional one. Whether this will lead to more or less economic integration and prosperity depends largely on the new regional government's policies. However, the sole fact of secession has a positive impact on production, for one of the most important reasons for secession is typically the belief on the part of the secessionists that they and their territory are being exploited by others. The Slovenes felt they were being robbed systematically by the Serbs and the Serbian-dominated central Yugoslavian government; and the Baltic people resented the fact that they had to pay tribute to the Russians and the Russian-dominated government of the Soviet Union. By virtue of secession, hegemonic domestic relations are replaced by contractual, mutually beneficial foreign relations. Instead of forced integration, there is voluntary separation. Forced integration, as also illustrated by measures such as busing, rent controls, affirmative action, anti-discrimination laws and, as will be explained shortly, "free immigration," invariably creates tension, hatred, and conflict. In contrast, voluntary separation leads to harmony and peace. Under forced integration, any mistake can be blamed on a "foreign" group or culture and all success claimed as one's own; hence, there is little reason for any culture to learn from another. Under a regime of "separate but equal," one must face up to the reality not only of cultural diversity but in particular of visibly different ranks of cultural advancement. If a secessionist people wishes to improve or maintain its position *vis-à-vis* a competing one, nothing but discriminative learning will help. It must imitate, assimilate, and, if possible, improve upon the skills, traits, practices and rules characteristic of more advanced societies, and it must avoid those characteristic of less advanced societies. Rather than promoting a downward leveling of cultures as under forced integration, secession stimulates a cooperative process of cultural selection and advancement.

Moreover, while everything else depends on the new regional government's domestic policies and there is no direct relation between size and economic integration, there is an important indirect connection. Just as political centralization ultimately tends to promote economic disintegration, so secession tends to advance integration and economic development. First, secession always involves the breaking away of a smaller from a larger population and is thus a vote against the principle of democracy and majoritarian rule in favor of private, decentralized ownership. More importantly, secession always involves increased opportunities for interregional migration, and a secessionist government is immediately confronted with the specter of emigration. To avoid the loss of its most productive subjects, it comes under increased pressure to adopt comparatively liberal domestic policies by

4. On this theme, see also Paul Johnson, *Modern Times* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983); and Robert Nisbet, *The Present Age* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

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allowing more private property and imposing a lower tax and regulation burden than its neighbors. Ultimately, with as many territories as separate households, villages or towns, the opportunities for economically motivated emigration is maximized, and government power over a domestic economy minimized.

Specifically, the smaller the country, the greater the pressure to opt for free trade rather than protectionism. All government interference with foreign trade forcibly limits the range of mutually beneficial interterritorial exchanges and thus leads to relative impoverishment, at home as well as abroad. But the smaller a territory and its internal markets, the more dramatic this effect will be. A country the size of the US, for instance, might attain comparatively high standards of living even if it renounced all foreign trade, provided it possessed an unrestricted internal capital and consumer goods market. In contrast, if predominantly Serbian cities or counties seceded from surrounding Croatia, and if they pursued the same protectionism, this would likely spell disaster. Consider a single household as the conceivably smallest secessionist unit. By engaging in unrestricted free trade, even the smallest territory can be fully integrated into the world market and partake of every advantage of the division of labor, and its owners may become the wealthiest people on earth. On the other hand, if the same household owners decided to forego all interterritorial trade, abject poverty or death would result. Accordingly, the smaller a territory and its internal markets, the more likely it is that it will opt for free trade.

Moreover, secession also promotes *monetary* integration. The process of centralization has also resulted in monetary disintegration; the destruction of the former international commodity (gold) money standard and its replacement with a dollar-dominated system of freely fluctuating government paper monies (i.e., a global, US-led government counterfeiting cartel). However, a system of freely fluctuating paper currencies — the Friedmanite-monetarist ideal — is strictly speaking no monetary system at all.[5] It is a system of partial *barter* — dysfunctional of the very purpose of money of facilitating rather than complicating exchange. This becomes obvious once it is recognized that, from the viewpoint of economic theory, there is no special significance attached to the way national borders are drawn. Yet, if one then imagines a proliferation of ever smaller national territories, ultimately to the point where each household forms its own country, Friedman's proposal is revealed for what it is — an outright absurdity. If every household were to issue its own paper currency, the world would be right back at barter. No one would accept anyone else's paper, economic calculation would be impossible, and trade would come to a virtual standstill. It is only due to centuries of political centralization and the fact that only a relatively small number of countries and national currencies remains, and hence that the disintegrative

5. See also Murray N. Rothbard, *The Case for a 100 Percent Gold Dollar* (Auburn, Al.: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1991); *The Case Against the FED* (Auburn, Al.: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1995); and Hans-Hermann Hoppe, "How is Fiat Money Possible? — or The Devolution of Money and Credit," in *Review of Austrian Economics,* Vol.7, no.2 (1994).

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consequences and calculational difficulties are far less severe, that this could have been overlooked. From this insight it follows that secession, provided it proceeds far enough, will actually promote monetary integration. In a world of hundreds of thousands of independent political units, each country would have to abandon the current fiat money system, which has been responsible for the greatest, world-wide inflation in all of human history, and once again adopt an international commodity money system such as the gold standard.

Secessionism, and the growth of separatists and regionalist movements in Eastern and Western Europe, in North America as well as elsewhere, represent not an anachronism but potentially the most progressive historical forces. Secession increases ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity, while in the course of centuries of centralization hundreds of distinct cultures were stamped out. It will end the forced integration brought about as the result of centralization, and rather than stimulating social strife and cultural nivellation, it will promote the peaceful, cooperative competition of different, territorially separate cultures. In particular, it will eliminate the immigration problem increasingly plaguing Western Europe as well as the US. Presently, whenever the central government permits immigration, it allows foreigners to proceed — literally on government-owned roads — to any of its residents' doorsteps, regardless of whether or not these residents desire such proximity to foreigners. "Free immigration" is thus to a large extent forced integration. Secession solves this problem by letting smaller territories each have their own admission standards and determine independently with whom they will associate on their own territory and with whom they prefer to cooperate from a distance.[6]

Lastly, secession promotes economic integration and development. The process of centralization has resulted in the formation of an international, US-dominated government cartel of managed migration, trade, and fiat money, ever more invasive and burdensome governments, globalized welfare-warfare statism and economic stagnation or even declining standards of living. Secession, if it is only extensive enough, could change all this. A world consisting of tens of thousands of distinct countries, regions and cantons, and of hundreds of thousands of independent free cities such as the present-day "oddities" of Monaco, Andorra, San Marino, Liechtenstein, Hong Kong, and Singapore, with the resulting greatly increased opportunities for economically motivated migration, would be one of small liberal governments economically integrated through free trade and an international commodity money such as gold. It would be a world of unprecedented economic growth and unheard of prosperity.

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6. On immigration see also Murray N. Rothbard, "Nations by Consent: Decomposing the Nation State," in *Journal of Libertarian Studies,* Vol.11, no.1 (1994); and Hans-Hermann Hoppe, "Free Immigration or Forced Integration?" in *Chronicles* (June 1995).

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*Eastern Europe after the Social Democratic Collapse: A Symposium**

David Ost *et al.*

David Ost: Beginning in 1993, former communist parties, in their new "social democratic" guises, began returning to power in Eastern Europe. First in Lithuania, then in Poland and Hungary, the victories of ex-communists raised some concerns about the possible return of the ancien regime. Far from bringing about any "return to communism," however, the ex-communists quickly made clear their full commitment to the transition to capitalism. Showing themselves true to their new name, these social democratic parties have continued the path of marketization and privatization, with symbolic tripartite commissions, cost-of-living increases to retirees and phraseology about "social justice" offered as the only consolations. What is social democracy in Eastern Europe and can it survive? Beginning in 1993, former communist parties began returning to power in Eastern Europe. While this development in Lithuania could be attributed to the specifics of the post-Soviet experience, the victories of former communists in Poland and

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* This is a transcript of a symposium sponsored by the Telos Institute and held in Chicago at the International Conference of the Council of European Studies, March 17, 1996. Its topic, the decline of post-communist social democracy in Eastern Europe is becoming increasingly relevant. In the fall of 1996, ex-communists lost power in Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria. Opinion polls in Poland showed the Social Democrats losing their top ranking for the first time in three years. The harsh budgetary restrictions imposed by the ruling Social Democrats in Hungary, meanwhile, suggest that this party will not be able to count on the votes from "economic losers" that were so crucial in propelling it to power in 1994. Ex-communist social democracy is facing as difficult a time as non-communist social democracy is in the West. This symposium explores the impending social democratic collapse. The participants are Andrzej Bloch, professor of economics at Antioch University; Joszef Borocz, associate professor of sociology at Rutgers University; Laszlo Bruszt, vice-rektor and professor of political science at Central European University in Budapest; Valerie Bunce, professor of government at Cornell University; Michal Federowicz, from the Institute for Political Studies in Warsaw; Bela Greskovits, professor of political economy at Central European University in Budapest and Warsaw; Jan Kubik, assistant professor of political science at Rutgers University; Mitchell Orenstein, a post-doctoral student at Brown University; David Ost, associate professor of political science at Hobart & Wm. Smith Colleges; Kazimierz Slomczynski; professor of sociology at Ohio State University; and Aleksander Surdej, who teaches at the Krakow Academy of Economics.

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Hungary indicate that this was a regional phenomenon. The new governments' policies, meanwhile, have made clear that, rather than any kind of "return to communism," the former communists continue full steam in the transition to a market economy, with symbolic tripartite commissions, cost-of-living increases to retirees, and phraseology about "social justice" offered as the only consolation.

But the social democratic gambit is in trouble. Far from stabilizing a liberal political system, as Western social democracy did in its heyday, the belated East European version only seems to be accelerating its discreditation. As these governments are unwilling and unable to make good on the promises and the hopes they engendered, the population has few other liberal political alternatives. Historically, social democracy stabilized liberal capitalism by politically and economically integrating non-elites, particularly the industrial working class. Trade unions were given privileged access to government decisions, and the state forced capital to pay wages and taxes allowing better living standards for workers and other citizens, thereby buying their consent. In the new global economy — the one Eastern Europe's social democrats are condemned to work in — all that has changed. Trade unions are increasingly marginalized, "worker" is no longer an all-inclusive category, and taxes extracted from capital only push capital to migrate elsewhere. Economic incorporation no longer seems possible; political incorporation no longer seems necessary.

East European voters rejected liberals for social democrats (ex-communists) in search of a more inclusive political economy. If social democracy cannot supply one, will voters simply turn back to the liberals? In the short run, given the lack of credible alternatives, that may happen. But the severity of today's crisis threatens the neat rotation in power of liberals and social democrats that long helped stabilize capitalism in the West. With that model in crisis in the West, can it really be much of a stabilizing force in the East?

These are the kinds of questions for today's symposium. What is the nature of East European social democracy? And why is it not likely to succeed? The fact that the social democrats are implementing the same policies as the liberals means that politics in Eastern Europe have to be rethought and the possibility — indeed, the likelihood — of alternatives barely present on the political scene today must be contemplated. Eastern Europe is groping toward an alternative. But what can it be? Will there be a continued rise of punitive moralism, in which politicians, aware that they are unable to satisfy people's economic interests, seek power and stability through an appeal to religious, ethnic, and nationalist identities? (This is the path being taken by today's Solidarity in Poland, to increasing public support). Is there any chance of a populist alternative, in the sense used in recent discussions in *Telos*, referring to greater reliance on local politics and a move toward regionalism? And what are the international ramifications of today's ex-communist East European social democracy?

Bela Greskovits: How is it possible, you ask, that there is a social democratic

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(or "social liberal," "left-wing liberal") regime in power in Eastern Europe which does not include a majority of the population in the economic and political expansion? Does this not lead to a political abyss? In fact, such an arrangement is really not new. It is precisely the kind of arrangement that has prevailed on an *international* level in recent years. The new global economy marginalizes large parts of the population, and yet it thrives. So if something is possible internationally, why should it not be possible within a national framework? What is likely in Eastern Europe over the next yen years is a durable, lower-level equilibrium between incomplete democracies and imperfect market economies. So far, a social equilibrium has been possible not because of governmental policies of inclusion but because of structural, cultural and institutional legacies from the past. These include the general living standard, accumulated reserves making it possible to survive economic hard times, the age structure of the population, etc. These include the absence of concentrated and politically explosive poverty; the accumulated reserves making it possible to survive hard times; the tradition of informal and illegal survival strategies; the labor unions' co-operative rather than confrontational strategies; and the relatively high share of the rural and senior citizen population. It is those legacies of communism which help to explain the dominance of individual survival strategies over collective political protest, and the choice of non-violent and democratic forms of protest rather than disruptive strikes or riots. In the future, the stabilizing factors for the new system will derive from the structural effects of the new liberal reforms. One of the consequences of the reforms is that the collective action capacities of the "losers" will be curbed further. I am referring here to the industrialization process, the tertiarization of the society and economy, the increasing portion of precarious forms of employment, all of which lead to increasing intra-class cleavages within business and labor, which makes either class-based politics or an effective challenge of neoliberal economic policies inefficient and thus unlikely. People who have remained patient so far, thanks to the legacies of the past, in the future will be forced to continue to remain patient by the consequences of current policies. In other words, the political system need not include people to maintain itself. The national economy can carry out its own marginalization of much of the population just as the world economy has done.

Laszlo Bruszt: This argument is too bistructural. It leaves out politics — or at best treats politics only as a structure of legacies. Is this really the death of social democracy? What is happening in the region are various kinds of *destatization*, carried out by various forces in various ways. But the exact policies undertaken matter a great deal — at least as much as the structural factors Greskovits talked about. These policies, e.g., different labor market policies, have curbed or constrained social peace, thereby shaping the nature of political reform. The Belorussian story is not the same as the Romanian one, the Czech experience is not the Hungarian experience. In trying to understand the East European future, it is necessary to

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analyze not just the structural factors but the differences in democracies, in democratic institutionalization, in the exclusiveness or inclusiveness of policies.

Liberalism, Parties and the Economy

Michal Federowicz: Bruszt is right: There are important differences between East European post-communist states. Thus it is very hard to come up with a long-term prognosis for the whole region. Destatization is another matter. First of all, people in the region do not believe it. Instead, as recent research shows, they perceive the role of the state in the economy as stable, well-established and persistent.

As to the question of the importance of the economy in politics, recent electoral studies show that two dimensions need to be distinguished: economics and tradition. The interesting thing is that these two cleavages are completely independent of each other. Every kind of combination is possible. A careful examination of the data shows that attitudes about the economy did not have a major impact on voter's decisions during presidential elections in Poland in 1990 and 1995. What mattered most was attitude about the past, and one's assessment of a given candidate's view of the past. Political polarization, in other words, takes place not around economic issues but around tradition. In the Polish case, this relates also to one's attitude toward the church. What is important here is not religious affiliation but one's view on the role of the church in politics. The simple indicator of whether the church should diminish its involvement in politics was strongly related to the evaluation of a candidate and one's position toward the recent past. What this means, in other words, is that there do not seem to be any real alternatives in the economic sphere. There is no real bargaining between liberals and social democrats. The distinctions of Left and Right refer not to differences in economic policy but to differences in cultural policy.

Ost: But is that not likely to change? Is the economic situation not likely to become crucial in affecting political choices?

Federowicz: Well, yes. But it shows that economic interests do not shape political choices.

Bruszt: What is Ost's question? Why are economic issues a problem, when in Poland there is a surge of economic growth?

Ost: The problem is that it is still a very skewed growth, concentrated in a few urban areas. It is not inclusive, and it is doubtful that it will be able to last. Moreover, one should recall E. P. Thompson's point when speaking about the social and phenomenological side of material growth in early 19th-century England. Living standards certainly did improve during this period, but the improvement was accompanied by an unprecedented degree of insecurity. By 1840, wrote Thompson, most people were better off than their forerunners had been fifty years before, but they had suffered and continued to suffer this slight improvement as a catastrophic experience. This is how many people have experienced recent growth in Eastern Europe. They can buy things they could not buy

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before. They have access to goods and services denied them in the past. But they also know that none of this is guaranteed. They are insecure in a way they had not been in the past, fearing unemployment and feeling they cannot do anything about it. Greskovits is right that labor does not have the organizational capacities it had in the past, due to the changing nature of the job market, the precarious nature of employment today. But it is a pipe dream to believe this will continue indefinitely without affecting the political structure. There is a mass of discontented people lacking political representation. Most of the people, quite simply, are *politically homeless*. They have cast their votes widely, voting first for the anti-communist party of rapid reform and then for the ex-communist party of slowed reform. In doing so, they have expressed their dissatisfaction with economic liberalism without rejecting the basic precepts of political liberalism. But increasingly they feel that these parties have betrayed them, which leaves them open to demagogic appeals. And this is the problem. Economic growth has not meant a mitigation of conflicts. Instead, as Federowicz has pointed out, it has changed the nature of conflicts. As people see that the supposed alternative to economic liberalism does not make much of a difference, it may lead to the embrace of a different alternative — not against economic liberalism but against political liberalism.

Valerie Bunce: You both seem to agree that it is very difficult for economics to serve as a political cleavage today. And, indeed, the factors leading to the 1993 Polish vote, when the ex-communists were returned to office, indicate that the capacity of economic issues to explain people's votes is very low. But what Ost seemed to be asking is: is that likely to remain the case in the future? Will the structure of the discourse — the dimensions that define debate and influence political outcomes — change? And therefore, will economics have a higher predictive capacity for elections in the future?

Federowicz: Exactly. There certainly are a number of problems which could be easily articulated politically, such as high unemployment and unequal salaries. And different social interests are beginning to organize around these issues.

Bunce: But the question is whether cultural issues, such as the role of the church in politics, or the capacity to predict voting in Hungary or Poland on the basis of church attendance, will win by default? Since the economy could not function as a political motivator, were these other issues allowed to dominate? Or are such "traditional" and "cultural" issues now durable and will they continue to have explanatory power even when economic discourse develops the capacity to differentiate among people, their positions, and their political behavior?

Ost: But economic issues are already important. Clearly, economic issues had something to do with the voting in Poland: working people rejected the neoliberal Freedom Union, while splitting their vote among the other parties. Still, the fact that a trade union was associated with neoliberal reform has made the link between party and economics extremely complex. The economic link is easier to see in Hungary, where working people and the rural poor voted heavily for the

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Socialist Party. But this is the reason a real crisis is brewing. Many people have turned to social democracy (as represented by the ex-communist parties in Poland and Hungary and an authentic non-communist Social Democratic Party in the Czech Republic) because they hoped this was an economic alternative. But social democrats in power have not offered any kind of alternative to liberalism. Instead, they have only made liberalism more efficient. They are coming to be known as good and capable administrators, but they are ceasing to represent any kind of economic alternative. So the question is, what will people do when they look for some economic alternative in the future? To whom will they turn? Historically, social democracy has played the crucial role in legitimating political liberalism. People have accepted democratic rules of the game because they were incorporated into the system by social democracy. If contemporary East European socialists cannot incorporate workers, will workers remain loyal to the democratic system? In other words, if social democracy does not succeed, can political liberalism be maintained? This would not necessarily mean some authoritarianism from yesteryear, though that is possible as an interim episode. More likely, the failure of social democracy would spell a crisis for the state as a whole, and perhaps for the organization of politics in terms of the state. In Western Europe, various regional alternatives have emerged in response to the crisis of the liberal state. The question is whether this will occur in Eastern Europe too, and if so, what will it be like?

Andrzej Bloch: It seems that debate over economic issues is on hold only for the moment. At present, the range of choices in economic policy for the liberals or social democrats is indeed very limited. But it is a preliminary phase of development. Sooner or later, resources will have to be accumulated and reshuffled within society, and then there may be the emergence of different types of strategies. Going back to the initial question, if what has happened is a collapse of social democracy, then what is the criterion of success? Is it reelection? A stable social order? Traditionally, social democracy has been evaluated in terms of traditional social programs (social safety net, employees' benefits, health and education issues, etc.) as the criteria of success. Yet there are also other ones. The social democratic parties were elected not so much because of disenchantment with social welfare provisions but because of the process whereby the new emerging elites had increasingly consolidated their political position. So far those elites, while neither fully consolidated nor homogeneous, have managed to identify a range of common interests. Economic issues have not been a key political factor only because elites are now united concerning what is necessary. When economic development will get to the point where substantial resources are needed for further modernization, then economic issues are likely to become more contentious.

Another key factor is agriculture. Sooner or later, considerable improvement in agricultural efficiency will lead to another wave of migration. This will demand a lot of resources. But where are those resources to come from? Any government in power will have to tackle these questions. It will be forced to

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oversee a transfer of resources from one group to another. And what this means is that today's relatively peaceful elites are going to divide along new fault lines. If the social democrats are in power, they will surely be relying, as usual, on the state sector and the bureaucracy. In their quest for resources for development, they will turn to agriculture and the private sector. But this would immediately violate the current Social Democratic-Peasant Party alliance and lead to political crisis. Would social democrats try to muster resources by reducing wages and attacking the working class? If they do, they will stop being social democrats, right? This is exactly the problem they already face. In other words, economic matters are not *now* the determining issue, but are likely to become so soon, regardless of whether there is a high growth rate or not. Another factor likely to challenge the current calm concerning economic issues is that so much of the economy continues to exist outside of any state control. In Poland, approximately one-third of the national income is unaccounted for. This is a result of deliberate neglect on the part of the government, aimed at allowing primitive accumulation in a variety of sectors. But sooner or later the government will have to say "stop." And at that time, today's Social Democratic supporters will become the social democratic government's biggest enemies. This will change the entire picture.

Mitchell Orenstein: Wait a minute: economics is already determining politics. Economic issues, people's sense of their economic interests, are already the key factors explaining how people vote in post-communist Eastern Europe. The problem is that it is not quite clear how that is happening. First of all, one has to distinguish between presidential and parliamentary elections. In the presidential elections in Poland, people have seen personality and foreign policy as key issues. It is clear that in presidential elections in Poland people were looking at personality and they were looking at foreign policy issues — and those were the key issues in the race, whereas in parliamentary elections in Poland and elsewhere issues of economic interest are already dominant. When people vote for president, they vote for broad conceptions of the state and state interests, but when voting for a specific parliamentary party, their primary considerations are economic. This accords well with the presidentialism-parliamentarism literature that argues that parliamentary systems tend to encourage a higher degree of interest articulation. Parliamentary parties in Eastern Europe are already aggregating voters largely on the basis of economic interest. But this process has been masked to a certain extent by the popularity of catchall parties, that are not representing one particular economically-based interest group, but rather integrating maybe four or five economically-based interest groups.

Originally, most people expected the transition to bring them benefits. People were excited about economic reforms. And in a situation where everyone is expecting benefits, parties have a natural incentive to promise to provide such benefits in the future. This creates a real tendency to aggregate interests around programs for transformation that will bring in a majority of the population.

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Therefore, they need to create economic programs that will appeal to more than one interest group. All of the leading parties in Eastern Europe, mobilized voters on the basis of economic interests rather than ideological appeals.

Ost: But their understanding of their economic interests was itself shaped by ideological appeals!

Orenstein: Well, parties that specifically attempted to mobilize voters on the basis of ideological appeals have been losing elections. This has been true with the Right in Poland as well as in Hungary. The Movement for a Democratic Slovakia is often described as a nationalist party. But in fact it is only partially that. The real nationalist party in Slovakia, very ideological and clear in its perspective, gets only 5% of the votes. The victorious Movement for a Democratic Slovakia has mobilized a clientelist network of self-interest. So, to return to the question at hand, the social democratic parties emerging are very much centrist parties, aggregating winners and losers, businessmen, professionals, workers and pensioners, like today's British Labor Party rather than the class-based social democratic parties of the past.

Aleksander Surdej: Many of the questions raised boil down to governability. There have been several significant cultural changes in Eastern Europe since 1989 that lead to the "massification" of society. Most important here is the emergence of mass culture, with political ideas shaped almost entirely by the media. This has an impact on the party system. There is no stable party system because there is a mass society in formation. Media politics is currently shaping a *post-party* era for countries that need a solid, durable party system. When speaking about governability, one assumes there are reliable, credible partners, usually political parties, that can make bargains between regions and between social groups. But media politics has prevented the formation of credible parties and partners. In Poland, media politics has allowed numerous small groups to pretend they represent real social interests, when in fact they are just media personalities. If this symposium was to be transmitted on Polish TV, it could present itself as one more political party, with its own tiny influence on the people's minds. This confusion does not augur well for governability.

Bunce: What are the standards for understanding a coherent party system? If one looks at Western Europe, the US and the like, one finds floating catchall party systems virtually everywhere. And the question is, to use Ost's provocative phrasing, does that lead us to panic about the future of Eastern Europe, simply because, for example, party identification is low? We can debate about the various kinds of issues and dimensions anchoring the party system, but the point is that the political and economic context is quite fluid. There are several reasons for that. One is the transformation, and the other was brought up by Surdej: namely, the impact of mass politics on the process, which only works to blunt ideological edges, to press in the direction of catchall parties. But is this necessarily such a big problem? The party system itself may not be terribly well

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defined, and one can debate about what anchors this system now and in the near future, but it is not clear that this is necessarily a political problem. Put another way, what are the costs of joining Western-style politics (in the sense of media saturation and the absence of clear differences among the parties) with the political and economic context of post-communist transformation?

Ost: The instability of the party system may not be a profoundly important problem. But if that is right, it has profound theoretical implications. Democratic theorists usually argue that people in modern mass society need political affiliation, a sense of political loyalty. It is this assumption that has underpinned fear of demagogic populism in post-communist Eastern Europe. Extreme right-wing parties were said to have an opportunity because citizens entered the new era without any established party loyalty. People had rejected communist parties but were not yet able to develop loyalties to a democratic party. When post-communist reform caused inevitable hardships, the political allegiance of citizens would be up for grabs, and thus fertile ground for demagogues to offer their nasty fundamentalist solutions to people's real economic problems. The interesting thing, however, is that, outside of the former Yugoslavia, this analysis does not hold. Everywhere in the region party loyalties have been vague and in flux, but so far it does not seem to matter. Party loyalty is about as durable as the next television commercial. In Eastern Europe, ambitious politicos do not need to engage in tough organizational work. As Surdej has pointed out, they only need to find a small nucleus of supporters and declare themselves a party. Free television advertising does the rest.

Of course, this seems to be a worldwide phenomenon. It has long been clear that parties are declining in the West: in recent years, Ross Perot and Steve Forbes have shown how individual candidates can gain great popularity through the use of television alone. The East European experience, however, suggests that parties may not be important even for an early stage in building democratic political systems. And if that is the case, what does it mean for the political future? What kind of political system can emerge from this? Does the increasing irrelevance of parties mean lower and lower levels of civic participation, as Robert Putnam claims? Or does it mean that alternatives, more direct possibilities of civic participation, are on the agenda? So far, it is not clear.

One caveat needs to be made. While weak affiliations to democratic political parties have not led to the emergence of right-wing extremism, there is no guarantee that the state of affairs will continue into the indefinite future. Over the past three years in small dying industrial towns in Poland, there has been no right-wing mobilization. In recent months, however, support for the nationalist Right has been growing markedly. The crucial factor here seems to be the crisis of the Social Democrats. When the liberal parties that emerged from Solidarity discredited themselves by their economic policies, the citizenry moved to the ex-communist Social Democrats as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction. But by maintaining the same discredited neoliberal policies, the Social Democrats have

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produced the same social frustration their predecessors did. So what do citizens do now? A vote for the Social Democrats was a vote against economic liberalism but in favor of continued political liberalism. (The post-communist parties in Poland and Hungary had clearly established after 1989 they were loyal to basic democratic norms.) Now, however, people seem increasingly ready to drop not just economic liberalism but political liberalism as well. And "political liberalism" here means not opposition to the "big state" and the "new class," but rather to basic principles of tolerance without which no pluralistic community can survive.

Reality and Imagination

Greskovits: To return to the issue raised by Bruszt concerning economic constraints on politics, these constraints seem profound. This is not an economic determinist argument. What is behind these constraints, behind the mainstream economic policies chosen by East European governments, is a very strong political commitment shared by all major political forces in Eastern Europe, at least in the Visegrad countries: a commitment to join the European community, to stay on good terms with the international financial community, and to preserve formal democratic institutions. Such political commitments have consequences on economic policy choices that become binding for the polity. ("New liberal economic strategies" are related to these binding commitments.) There are, of course, variations in Eastern Europe; no economic policies are ever exactly the same. Variations can be seen in the sequencing of reforms, in their speed and intensity, in differences in specific welfare and structural adjustment policies, etc. But these are just variations in the context of mainstream commitments. Is social democracy possible in such contexts? I think not. Of course, one can choose to define some particular combination as a new social democracy — a "neoliberal social democracy," perhaps. But this would be a very paltry social democracy compared to earlier versions.

Whether such "neoliberal social democratic parties" can be successful is a different question. Sooner or later, they can. It is very hard to imagine economic decline continuing for the next twenty years. But even if the economy does continue to decline, the question is, does the population have a choice? Is there a social democratic recipe for the transformation? It is not easy to create a social democratic alternative. If one examines the new liberal ideas that have come to power internationally, it becomes clear that they won in the intellectual arena. They proved to be a useful recipe for international economic policy advisors, and they offered attractive political programs for parties in the East and many in Latin America as well. They will create their social base after their implementation.

Ost: You are very optimistic.

Greskovits: Or maybe pessimistic. The point is that a social democratic alternative must be capable of doing all the things neoliberalism has been able to do. And nothing of the kind is likely to happen any time soon.

Ost: Just because there is no "recipe" for change does not mean that people

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will not try to create one. Your analysis is too technocratic. Even if there *is* "no other way," well, people have often embarked on "hopeless" projects. Today's Solidarity, in alliance with the populist Movement for Rebuilding Poland, is getting a great deal of support proposing an "irrational" program of "universal privatization," or a re-nationalization of wealth and its subsequent redistribution in the form of citizen vouchers. Economists can pillory the program all they want, but that does not mean people will not pursue it. The reason "hopeless" socio-economic experiments were not pursued after 1989 was not because "there was no other way," but because there was no social base or intellectual elite articulating any alternatives. Communism was defeated, after all, by liberals who approved of the market reforms the communists had already begun to introduce. Workers could — and did — read any content they wanted into the still-blank book of capitalism. There was an intellectual consensus in 1989. But that does not mean it will last forever. If "neoliberal social democracy" fails to deliver on its economic promise — and everyone on this panel seems to expect that it will — then the question of a new political future will be on the agenda even if all the economists in the world say there is no other way.

Federowicz: Orenstein is correct in claiming that economic interests are behind the voters' decisions. For citizens, economic issues matter. The puzzling part, however, is that they do not seem to matter much to elites. In the 1995 presidential election in Poland, the economic elites were not interested in highlighting differences in economic interests. Instead, they sought to suppress the capacity of expression of economic interests during the campaign. Of course, this might be a specificity of a presidential campaign. Nevertheless, there was a significant difference in this regard between the presidential campaign of five years ago and the recent one. After coming to power, the main party was interested in pushing the public debate toward issues other than economic ones. This connects to what Greskovits and Bunce said, that the political class is not interested in publicly discussing economic issues.

Jan Kubik: This category of interests needs more careful examination. Interests do not simply exist out there, in the good old Marxist way, to be reflected in this or that action. Instead, they are constructed through actions, perceptions, discourses and so on. People do not simply react to "their interests." They react to a comprehensive framing of the situation within which they find themselves. Economic interest is just one of the many elements of the situation. This helps make sense of the already mentioned paradox that the Right and Left parties, in the traditional language, both offered more or less similar, somewhat social democratic economic programs. Parties of the Right enjoyed a certain support for the first two or three years after 1989. Then, many of the same people who had been voting for right-wing candidates switched to the social democrats. But the parties' economic programs were not very different. So it was very important how this economic situation was framed in the overall platform. Perhaps even more

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important was that the social democrats were able to send a signal to the electorate that they are simply a more reliable and efficient provider of goods. That was a very critical signal, also framed within other elements of discourse describing the world around them. They were not saying that the situation is bad because of masons and Jews and behind-the-scenes manipulations. Instead, they used a different language, a more class-specific language, which, after three or four years of new capitalism, was more in tune with people's understanding.

In this regard, consider what happened in 1993, with the collapse of the last "Solidarity" government of Hanna Suchocka. Here economic interest can be clearly seen as increasingly coming to the fore. Many Poles like to say that the government fell (by one vote, after all) just because some poor guy did not make it to parliament on time. In fact, however, this vote came on the heels of the biggest protest wave of the post-1989 era, after a full four or five months of mobilization. Who took part in those protests? Teachers and public health workers (doctors and nurses), those in Solidarity as well as in OPZZ (the former "official" union). The fall of the Suchocka government was very much due to real economic factors. The protesters were organized by both Solidarity and OPZZ that worked together. And this tremendous wave of protest, and then the kind of mandate given to the Solidarity representation in parliament asking for the vote of no confidence, creates this kind of more complicated situation. Well, the point is, of course, that in this case the relative deprivation theory may work, because teachers and health professionals were losing, comparatively, to other professions, particularly those employed by the private sector.

One other observation: why all the talk only about political parties? Why not talk about "civil society"? Parties may be in crisis, but there is tremendous growth in associations and voluntary activity. People seem perfectly able to take care of a lot of problems that for the political class may seem unresolvable.

Ost: Are you saying that the state need not play the kind of role it did in the past because the emerging civil society will take care of itself? Is there in Eastern Europe a radical de-emphasis of the state and other formal political institutions?

Kubik: Well, the ideal combination, of course, is a strong state and a strong civil society, with the state providing the legal and constitutional framework defining as clearly as possible the rules of the game. Of course, the state also needs to take care of certain things, since the growing importance of regional and local action has produced tremendous disparities and discrepancies. In Silesia, for example, some places have 3% unemployment and some places 50%. So, clearly, there must be something above local networks and organizations. Interestingly, however, people in the regions themselves are quite adamant in their distrust of the state. They think the state does the job poorly and takes too much of the available resources for itself.

Kazimierz Slomczynski: Much of the discussion has dealt with economic and political constraints. While room for maneuver within the post-communist

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camp is limited, besides these constraints, it is important to look at social and psychological contexts in which these groups operate. What kind of society are they operating within? Consider the question of the legitimacy of the transformation. There is very little support for building a capitalist system. People rejected the old system without accepting a new one. The delegitimation of the communist system was quick and deep. People really wanted to abandon the old system. But that did not mean they automatically accepted the new one, whose real workings were unknown to them. In general, in the region there is an aversion to systemic change. This is, of course, very understandable, since individuals today must negotiate a costly operation of adaptation to new rules of the game.

Ost: Are you saying there is an aversion to *all* change?

Slomczynski: To these particular changes. In response to the question whether people want to return to the communist system, over 80% in all these countries say no. But if people are asked about increasing inequalities, economic inequalities, and what kind of inequalities are accepted, then a different picture emerges. People tend to accept inequalities more than before, but still . . .

Bruszt: Sorry to interrupt, but there is also data I have collected comparing attitudes in Eastern and Western Europe, and it is clear from *this* data that the meaning of people's responses to public opinion surveys depends a great deal on the political context. When asked about capitalism, for example, the Spanish answer that they actually like it much less than *any* of the East Europeans, including the Ukrainians. The difference, of course, is that they have actually experienced capitalism, and it is not reasonable to compare reactions of people in different systems, whose experiences have been so diverse. In Poland, for example, when people are asked about the direction and pace of the transformation, the data shows that people's primary reaction is confusion. They simply do not know what they will face in the future.

Consider the question of the post-communists' (or Social Democrats') electoral victories. The source of their success is that they were able to communicate two things to the public. The first was that the state needs to take a more active role in the transformation. The second was that the social cost must be limited. These two themes were accepted by large segments of the population. But these governments now face tremendous difficulties. In Poland, the Social Democrats face two major problems. First, they must undertake a deep restructuring of heavy industry, still largely subsidized by the state. Second, they need to do something about their alliance with the Peasant Party, which is supported by a segment of the population that must largely disappear in the next twenty years. This alliance makes it very difficult for the present post-communist coalition to act.

Jozsef Borocz: Just a word on public opinion data. Basically, surveys indicate how people think. Respondents tell the pollsters what they think when they are asked, which is often very far from election day. So what is the political significance of these responses? There is a very complicated sort of sociology of

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knowledge and epistemological set of problems there. The other issue has to do with what those parties actually do once they acquire power. Whoever the Hungarian Minister of Finance is, whatever his conviction, he still begins his day at 9 AM and at 9:05 they bring him a huge stack of papers to sign. And he has to make an enormous set of decisions pertaining to the running of the country. There are countries operating under very severe external constraints.What are the alternatives? What is it that a socialist-oriented government can do when its budget and economic reform plan are evaluated every three months by the most powerful international organizations in the world economy today, such as the IMF?

Globalism and Regionalism

Ost: This is a nice lead into two other issues: the international dimension, and possible regionalist alternatives. Earlier, Kubik talked about the growing role of civil society. Borocz has now mentioned the role of the IMF. And all the East European countries talk constantly about "joining Europe." The national state is becoming obsolete. This is a fundamental departure from the entire postwar scenario, where the state played a crucial role in capitalist and communist society alike. The state built up the economy and maintained standards of living. The big parties that governed the state also played a key role in mobilizing citizens, getting them active in politics. For decades, citizens became active in public life only through bureaucratic, top-heavy political parties. But today all of that is falling apart. Government, whether in Hungary or in the US, is not in a position to provide the social welfare nets it did in the past, because it is harder to tax and regulate corporations in the era of global economy. Eastern Europe, meanwhile, talks of giving up much of its authority to the European Union.

Are these developments likely to create in Eastern Europe the kinds of regionalist tendencies existing in Western Europe? Will there be divisions between regions that do well and those that do not? In other words, while *one* response to the fall of communism has been the rise of ethnic nationalisms, most notably in the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, is there a possibility of *non-ethnic* regionalism, based on economic conditions?

Bunce: Elsewhere, Surdej has mentioned the possibility of "beggar thy neighbor" policies in the region. In that context, consider the effort between Poland, Hungary, and the Czech and Slovak Republics to build cooperative linkages with each other. The history of Visegrad cooperation from 1990 to 1996 indicates that there are clear limits on cooperation among these countries. This is true especially now, since 1) the four countries have lost their common enemy (Russia); 2) they have begun to differentiate with respect to domestic politics and economics; 3) they see political stability, economic growth and international security as dependent upon integration with the EU and NATO; and 4) they increasingly see both of these international institutions as limited in their willingness and capacity to expand eastward. As a result, the Visegrad countries are

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increasingly locked into a competitive struggle over the question of getting into "Europe" first and fast. Thus, in place of cooperation (as in 1990-92) we increasingly see competition, if not conflict. Cooperation, aside from the very limited trade that takes place within the Central European Free Trade area, is the exception and not the rule. When combined with the resentments of the other postcommunist states over the issue of Visegrad favoritism in the West, this brings up the larger question of how quickly the EU will decide on full membership for the Visegrad countries. The dilemma for the EU is how to sequence membership, given, for example, continuing political problems in Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria; the growing tensions among all these states in the event of sequencing; and the considerable "domestic" problems facing a recently expanded EU with an ambitious agenda for monetary and foreign policy union. Greskovits spoke of a consensus of sorts emerging within the Visegrad countries (and Slovenia as well). But does this consensus not rest on the assumption that Western Europe is committed to full integration with Eastern Europe through the eastward expansion of EU and NATO? Without expansion of these international institutions, the East will be isolated. This is a problem not just in terms of security, finances, and for keeping the transformation on track. It is also a problem for identity formation, given the obsession throughout Eastern Europe with being "European." The expansion of NATO and the EU is likely to be a divisive process. Favorites will emerge, and some will be left behind. And that includes Russia and perhaps Ukraine — countries that are very large, that border the Visegrad region, and feature not a small amount of domestic turmoil.

Federowicz: This issue is absolutely crucial. Economic and political strategies designed to support full international integration of the region will turn out to be a failure if the West is not interested. The commitment to integration cannot be unilateral. What is needed is an East-West dialogue, not an Eastern monologue.

Bunce: Obviously, the breakup of Czechoslovakia resulted in part from economic differences between the Czechs and the Slovaks (or, more precisely, their two leaders). At the same time, European integration through NATO and the EU means a reduction in state sovereignty. If one assumes a zero-sum game, one can posit a weakening of the state as it is "reduced" by integration from above and regionalism from below. The economic and social legacy of state socialism will encourage that, because regions have, in many cases, quite identifiable economic interests that could feed into regionalism. On the other hand, there are reasons to think that the last thing the Social Democrats in power want to do is to move toward a decentralization of the state. As Bloch has said, there will be pressures on the state to hold whatever sovereignty and resources it can. But it is also important to emphasize that the process of integration in the EU and NATO is very long-term. A lot can happen between now and ten years from now.

Bloch: This next decade is likely to encourage more regionalism.

Greskovits: Maybe, if we assume there is a relatively fast integration, say

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within ten years (not enough for complete integration but certainly for partial economic integration), then those regional interests may emerge. But even then, regionalism will take time. Most regionalism develops today as part of a global process of flexible specialization. But Eastern Europe is only at the beginning stages of its integration into the global market. In the short-term, there is no force powerful enough to overcome the governments' centralizing tendencies. While the Social Democrats may favor centralized power, if only by force of habit, it is not unlikely that successor governments, composed of other parties, will take a different position on this question. For a regionalist alternative to emerge, it will require a huge and messy reallocation of resources between regions, strata, and industries. Estimates of the necessary rate of accumulation over the next years necessary to meet these objectives are astonishingly high. This is not possible without some powerful action from the state, and that requires a centralized government that would suppress any tendency toward regionalism. So, regionalist tendencies do exist. But they are so weak and in such an embryonic stage that they will probably not play any significant role in the next ten years.

Kubik: There are two kinds of regionalization: one across countries and one within countries. Each will unfold in different ways and will have different consequences. There is already mobilization of identities by parties appealing to nationalistic ideologies to fight any move toward "Euro-regions." As for internal regionalism, the issue is not simply that there is no power at the regional level able to overcome the state's centralizing powers. Rather, there is another mechanism at work here, whereby local elites try hard to wrestle out as many resources as they can. Thus local elites play very skillfully the issue of identity, with the central government identified as the "other." But since that central government is still so necessary (among other reasons, because only it still has access to all-European agencies), the process has not yet gone very far. Perhaps only when the East European countries enter all-European structures, giving regional elites eased access to resources, will local elites push the process of regionalization.

Borocz: There is a tremendous struggle between regional and central elites for the same resources, and it is not easy for regional people to get them.

Surdej: European integration means greater foreign involvement in the restructuring of the domestic economy, and people have mixed feelings about this. On the one hand, people fear their country will be subordinated to global market processes and will lose out because of this. On the other hand, figures concerning the volume of foreign investments per capita show that Poland, for example, might not get a sufficient share of global foreign investment — sufficient to speed up economic development and to attenuate the conflict between the aspirations for consumption and the need for modernizing productive assets. A similar marginalization may affect many areas in the region. A comparison of Eastern Europe with Southeast Asia shows that this entire region gets less direct foreign investment than Thailand gets from US investors alone. In addition, there

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is a fear than if Eastern Europe is subordinated to the internal social and labor regulations of the EU, it will become even less attractive for foreign investors. That will mean competition from two groups: those countries with cheap labor, and those with high tech capabilities. It is not easy to solve this dilemma and to improve the competitive position of the region in the global division of labor. Governments are thus oscillating between belief in the spontaneous inflow of foreign capital and the need to create special tax arrangements to attract foreign investment. At the same time, paradoxically, there is a growing concern, stimulated by right-wing nationalist parties, that Poland will be "bought out" by foreigners. Fear of phantoms seems to be a distinguishing feature of the mass psychology of transforming societies.

Ost: As a popular East European joke in 1990 had it: "our greatest fear is that the Germans are coming. Our second greatest fear is that they are not coming." In the end, most "foreign" investment has indeed come from Germany, but that has been its investment in Eastern Germany. According to a recent estimate, Germany has invested in Eastern Germany alone fifteen times more than the entire world has invested in all other European post-communist countries combined. And even East Germany has a long way to go.

Borocz: Of course, the gross inflows are not very big, but the distribution of the capital inflow is extremely uneven. Hungary, with 10% of the population of Eastern Europe, got 70% of the foreign investment. *Within* Hungary, only two regions got the bulk of the investment, and so on. The data has to be disaggregated to make sense of the patterns.

Bunce: Thus, as to the question of whether there is any alternative to dependency, the answer would have to be no. This is not even debatable. The second observation is that a new line has developed in Europe. The line that once divided East and West is now moving eastward and northward. Russia is on one side, along with the rapidly disintegrating state of Belarus, and Central and West European countries are on the other. This is a line which, as in the Cold War era, draws at once economic, political and military distinctions. The key regional actor in the next ten years will be Ukraine, because of its sheer size and the fact that it straddles the new line dividing Europe. This new line, however, is not so sharp as it once was in the "good old days" of the Cold War, when there was a nice, clean East versus West. Today, the line is, roughly speaking, capitalist-democratic-European-integrated-stable versus capitalist-semi-authoritarian-isolated-unstable. And that is going to cause a lot of problems — for both sides of the divide. There is another new line, in this case running East-West that separates the Visegrad states from the southern portion of Eastern Europe, with Slovenia having succeeded of late in moving northward into the Visegrad constellation. That line also seems to be one which is going to reflect a NATO division, an EU division, an external investment division, and a political stability division. In this sense, Eastern Europe (with the considerable "help" of the West)

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has been in fact already redefining itself in regional terms.

Ost: In light of that, do you see NATO expanding to these countries non-problematically — or perhaps problematically, but nevertheless?

Bunce: Very problematically. My guess is that the NATO expansion, which the US strongly supports, is going to happen, and in a way that will sharpen political, economic, and regional cleavages. And these cleavages, like their earlier versions, will define for the entire postcommunist region the haves and have-nots and the dimensions of domestic and international conflict.

Ost: As Bunce makes clear, then, the international situation poses problems for the region regardless of the identity of the ruling party. And this leads back to the crisis of social democracy discussed at the beginning of this symposium. In the end, while the symposium's participants disagreed over the extent to which political choices have so far been shaped by economic realities, they agreed that the ex-communists' hold on power is likely to be tenuous. Quite simply, the reign of Eastern Europe's social democratic parties does not solve any of the systemic problems faced by the countries in the region. Economically, the social democrats are not in a position to counteract the hegemony of neoliberalism; culturally, they remain too discredited to act as the bulwark of any strong new national identity. Yet the discussion did not come up with any satisfactory projection of the future. Bunce posits a new regional divide — between countries rather than within them — and Greskovits claims that the central state will continue to play a key role. But this leaves open the question of how exactly the central state will be organized, and what kind of economic and cultural problems they will face. In the end, international factors are likely to be decisive. Entry into NATO and the EU is eagerly sought by all important political tendencies in Eastern Europe. There is unlikely to be the kind of popular resistance to globalization that is increasingly developing in Western Europe, if only because the long legacy of communism and the continuing fear of Russia make the apparent alternative, international isolation, more scary than dependency. Here political legacies are more important than economic interests. Yet the costs of joining both transnational organizations will be quite high. Entry into NATO will force huge new defense expenditures on frail national budgets, and will bankrupt local military production as NATO moves toward centralized Western procurement. Entry into the EU, meanwhile, will entail huge sacrifices both on local agriculture, which will lose much of the state support it still has, as well as on labor, where jobs will be lost due to increased competition and the rise of labor costs. If these developments are nevertheless inevitable, as they now seem, then cultural issues, such as religion and local regionalisms, may play a more important role in East European domestic politics. That, however, is a different discussion, which will have to wait for another symposium.

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Is There a Telos *Right?*

Elías José Palti

As a reader of (and one-time contributor to) *Telos*,[1] I am puzzled by the latest ideological orientation of this journal. How can a self-postulated "progressive" journal openly support Proposition 187, as Thomas Fleming does in his article in issue 104.[2] One may suspect a misunderstanding — that this is not what Fleming really meant, or, if he did, that his view is not representative of the journal. However, in their introduction to that same issue, Piccone and Ulmen dissipate any possible confusion in this regard by clearly endorsing Fleming's position. "Preference to European rather than Asian or African immigrants is not necessarily racist," Piccone and Ulmen reiterate. If not, what is it? And they answer: "There is a cultural dimension to the social composition of the US, and the desire to maintain a Western society with a Judeo-Christian profile is neither irrational nor xenophobic. If there is not a common cultural horizon, if it is all open to the world and it becomes impossible to distinguish between inside and outside, the US as a distinct cultural and political entity will sooner or later cease to exist. There have to be shared traditions, customs, values, etc. . . . And if there are particular ethnic groups who are unassimilable or unwilling to assimilate to American society, does it make sense to have them join communities already on the verge of dysfunctionality?"[3] This statement can prove, at best, that selective immigration is necessary for the preservation of some postulated "American values," but it hardly will convince any reader that it is not racist. Hitherto, *Telos*' editors have rejected any charge of undergoing a reactionary slippage as reflecting "liberal prejudices" among their critics. The recent Conference on Populism at the Cooper Union (and reproduced in issues 103 and 104) set a landmark in the ideological trajectory of this once self-defined leftist journal. Of particular concern me here is the fact that the "populist turn" that motivates this seemingly reactionary slippage has also led them to address a number of problems and contradictions (which manifested themselves at the Conference). Here I will highlight some of these problems and explore how they came about, i.e., the underlying politico-theoretical reasons that generate these aporias. After 106 issues, *Telos* has found itself at

1. Elías José Palti, "Liberalism vs. Nationalism: Hobsbawm's Dilemma," *Telos* 95 (Spring 1993), pp. 109-26.

2. Thomas Fleming, "Three Faces of Democracy: Cleisthenes, Jefferson, and Robespierre," *Telos* 104 (Summer, 1995), p. 67.

3. Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen, "Introduction," *Telos* 104 (Summer, 1995), p. 10.

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a crossroads. Hopefully, these notes by an uncommitted observer may help to locate where the problematic knots of *Telos*'s populist orientation lie, to ascertain their meaning, and finally, to provide possible alternatives.

The origins of *Telos*' "populist turn" can be traced to its abandonment of its initial matrix of thought, which closely followed the kind of "Freudo-Marxist" orientation of the Frankfurt School. Although that final outcome was initially unpredictable, this re-definition provided the theoretical framework which later would catalyze the populist orientation: the concept of "artificial negativity" then coined by Paul Piccone.[4] The "Frankfurt" imprint still expressed itself in this concept with the denunciation of the "technocratic order" led by a "bureaucratic-managerial" elite (the so-called New Class), which would control and administer private leisure and individual wishes. But to Marcuse's image of such a "one-dimensional society," Piccone then juxtaposed a peculiar "dialectic of enlightenment" according to which, once all vestiges of "negativity" have been swept away, the system would become self-contradictory. Its social and political unaccountability would also entail a degenerative process resulting in growing corruption, inefficiency and the system's total disfunctionality. Hence, in order to preserve itself, the system would have to create its own elements of "artificial negativity" (the so-called "new social movements"). However, to the extent that they are its own creature, these elements of "artificial negativity" cannot escape from the "identity logic" (Adorno) of the bureaucratic-managerial regime; i.e., they do not express any true emancipatory potential which could generate real contradictions to the system and, thus, compel it to flex its disciplining energies. Its final collapse, therefore, would have become inevitable. In short, the concept of "artificial negativity" offered Piccone an exit from the pessimistic Frankfurt vision by locating in the (empty) place of the revolutionary agent (whoever it might be) a particular historical dialectics by which the very triumph of the system would lead it to its own destruction.[5]

Thus *Telos* also began to move away from the "politically correct" Left, seeing the defense of "multiculturalism" as only another form of New Class technocratic regimentation. Finally, *Telos* differentiated itself from the cultivators of "cultural studies" — those concerned with discovering an assumed emancipatory potential (subversive of the canons of official culture) in the different forms of expression of either popular or high culture. The final contenders, however, would soon come to be (from the early 1980s) the theorists of "civil society" — the latest, most perfect expression and embodiment of the "intellectual Mandarinate."

Nevertheless, only by the end of the 1980s did these theoretical developments

4. See Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality," *Telos* 35 (Spring, 1978), pp. 43-54; and Tim Luke, "Culture and Politics in the Age of Artificial Negativity," *Telos* 35 (Spring, 1978), pp. 55-73.

5. See Paul Piccone, "From the New Left to the New Populism," *Telos* 101 (Fall, 1994), pp. 184-5; and "The Crisis of Liberalism and the Emergence of Federal Populism," *Telos* 89 (Fall, 1991), p. 35.

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and critical insights crystallize in an autonomous ideological-political project whose elaboration accompanies *Telos*' embrace of the "populist" cause. *Telos*' distancing from Habermas and the correlative approach to Carl Schmitt's ideas is then explained by the fact that, in the latter's writings the editors found, along with a critique of liberalism, the idea of the pre-existence of some "community" (the "We, the people" that every constitution invokes) as the premise (rather than the result, as liberals postulate) for the institution of any socio-political arrangement. It is then that *Telos* discovered "organic communities" (the towns of the American heartland, where republican virtues have been preserved since colonial times) as the *locus* of that "non-artificial negativity" whose re-animation could be effectively opposed to the technocratic forces of the New Class and, thus, re-democratize the American political system. However, this "populist approach" is not merely a nostalgic vision of an idealized past, of the kind of 19th century romanticism (only a "mirror image of progress . . . a criticism of progress that depends on the contrast between complex modern societies and the close-knit communities allegedly typical of the 'world we have lost'"[6]). The re-activation of "organic communities" and the re-democratization of the political system is not a melancholic, subjective drive oriented to the past. It is an objective and absolutely "contemporary" phenomenon (linked to the bankruptcy of the "welfare state" born in the 1930s) which has its expression in the political arena in the populist tone that today dominates American political discourse. This populist orientation is today, for the editors of *Telos,* omni-comprehensive, crossing through the whole ideological spectrum (from Pat Buchanan, to Clinton, including, of course, Ross Perot), thus rendering obsolete the traditional antinomies between Right and Left.

For *Telos*, the decline of the "welfare state" is at the basis of this "populist" upsurge in a double sense. On the one hand, on a cultural level, the de-legitimation of the liberal ideas of indefinite progress allows a re-orientation toward the past (intrinsic to any populist concept) seeking to re-activate those forms of communal life of traditional societies. "The populist rejection of modernity," says Piccone, "hitherto regarded as a sign of backwardness and immaturity, now becomes merely another political choice."[7] Populism, then, rises from a revision of the (typically "modern") linear concept of historical evolution and seeks to re-activate (redeem, in Benjamin's words) unfulfilled projects and re-invigorate those historically unrealized lines of possible development. On the other hand, the phenomenon of the re-activation of communal life would be something more than an atavistic drive in another sense: it would be today a correlate of the most recent transformation of the capitalist formation, i.e., the expansion of the post-Fordist or post-Taylorist system of production and the consequent dismantling of the economic and social structures based on large factories and industrial plants.

6. Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven. Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), p. 14.

7. Paul Piccone, "Postmodern Populism," *Telos* 103 (Spring, 1995), p. 49.

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It would not be a coincidence, for the editors of *Telos*, that the expansion of populist movements is most noticeable in those countries where the process of post-Fordization of the economy is most advanced. In the US, the expansion of this "postmodern" system of production would combine with the presence in the heartland of an untamed communal-republican tradition, the result of which is a current process of re-democratization of American political life. The success of the "New Right" would be to have perceived this phenomenon and to have readdressed its preaching toward "the American *grassroots*."

Telos' populist turn poses a number of problems and contradictions. The ideological construction of such a notion of "organic communities" is necessary within the logic of populist discourse ("this seeming pathological concern with the vindication of an idealized past," says Piccone, "turns out to be the *sine qua non conditio* of any political project pretending to be minimally viable").[8] But its status is not at all clear. Those idealized "organic communities" are, as Piccone states, only another kind (as nations, for Benedict Anderson) of "imagined communities."[9] However, his populist concept has at its premise not only the actual existence of such ideal "organic communities," but also their preservation in a state of primitive innocence (i.e., not systemically colonized). Otherwise, there would be no *real* social force (i.e., not a merely intellectual projection generated artificially "from above," which ultimately would only reinforce the system) to oppose to the colonizing tendencies of the technocratic-managerial bureaucracies. Which means that, if it were not the case, if that idea of "organic communities" did not relate (unlike that of "nationhood") to any extra-discursive referent, the populist contention, although opposite in its content, would be placed on the same intellectual level as the ideologies of the New Class (and, therefore, of "artificial negativity").[10] It is really hard to accept that American farmers are potentially a disruptive political power (rather, they have always served in this century as a conservative force, that allowed the stability and the preservation of the social balance in the US), or even that they can pose any true contradiction to the "managerial-bureaucratic technocracies" of the welfare state (*Telos*' editors seem to forget the fact, little publicized, that most of the official budget deficit is due to agricultural subsidies, which means that those "ingenuous" communities actually depend on and survive thanks to the official financial aid). But if these "organic communities" do actually exist as such, as *Telos* claims to be the case, this would force its editors to moderate their criticism of the New Class. It would also break the "dialectics of enlightenment" postulated by Piccone: insofar as the "total regimentation" of society would no longer

8. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

9. See his polemics against the "nationalistic" views of Russell Berman in Telos Staff, "Nationhood, Nationalism and Identity: A Symposium," *Telos* 105 (Fall, 1995), pp. 87-90.

10. Piccone could argue here that what differentiates both forms of intellectual constructions is who makes them. But this still presupposes the actual existence of the agents of those presuppositions (the New Class and the "organic communities," respectively). Schmitt's argument against the liberals now would revert back against its own holders.

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be such (an idea that *Telos* now rejects as a "myth"),[11] the system (according to the very Picconean concept) would still be far from its own complete self-destruction (which would lead us back to the kind of Frankfurtian skepticism from which *Telos* sought to escape). Thus both of the aims (in principle, mutually contradictory) postulated by *Telos* (to denounce the progressivist-liberal *intelligentsia*, avoiding, at the same time, relapsing into pessimism) would be equally frustrated.

In order to prevent this outcome, in the last few years Piccone's notion of the "dialectics of enlightenment" has twisted, now placing at its center the idea of the break of "global alternatives" as the true triggering mechanism of the process of decomposition of the managerial-technocratic regime. The dissolution of the USSR resulted in the re-politicization of the decisions of a power whose ideological motivations hitherto were obliterated under the hypocritical veil of an "objective" rationality *vis-á-vis* alleged "strategic necessities." However, this does not solve the problem. The actual existence and preservation of those assumed "organic communities" no longer call into question the vision of the decomposition of the system (a process which now would become activated from another reality), but this still does not prove their existence (which is yet presupposed). Nonetheless, the new perspective introduced does translate the problematic kernel of the "populist" concept, transferring it to the fact that, in order to effectively be opposed to both the skepticism of the "first generation of social critics" (the Frankfurt School) and the enlightened idealism of the second one (the "theorists of civil society"), the vindication of those organic communities must be extended to comprehend them under their *really existing* forms (since, otherwise, it would imply the pretension of a reformist capacity proper to the enlightened thinkers). To put it more plainly, the populist turn necessarily entails the justification of even the most reactionary aspects (racism, intolerance, religious fanaticism) ascribed to those populations of the American heartland almost in its own concept. As Piccone says, "radical democracy entails the specter of occasionally also having to legitimate slavery, bigotry, etc."[12]

At this point, *Telos* editors seem to hesitate. Before Russell Jacoby's question; "Do we want to support *all* organic traditions?" Piccone attempts as an answer the idea of a new historical dialectic according to which "postmodern populism" differentiates itself from its "premodern" version in that the affirmation of the institutions during the period that separates both forms of populism will prevent in the former the development of those authoritarian features that discredited the latter.[13] However, Piccone cannot follow this line of reasoning to its final consequences, since this would lead him back to some kind of teleologism — to a "philosophy of

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11. Robert D'Amico, "The Myth of the Totally Administered Society," *Telos* 88 (Summer, 1991), pp. 80-94.

12. Paul Piccone, "Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm?," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter, 1993-Spring, 1994), p. 21.

13. Piccone, "Postmodern Populism," *op. cit.*, p. 69.

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history" that would conceive it as a progressive course in which its different stages would be successively integrated in superior syntheses of civilization. This, besides the fact that it contradicts his historical concept, would also entail a vindication of the role of the New Class (definitively, a decisive one, since it would purge populism of its authoritarian residues), which would demolish his criticism of it. However, the idea of a less authoritarian character of the "new populism" in relation to its predecessor does not seem really to meet the evidence taken for those very cases *Telos* postulates as examples (the Lombard League, Le Pen's movement, etc.). All this explains why the above quoted line of argumentation coexists in *Telos* (although not without generating tensions, which produced divisions in its editorial staff) with a now unambiguous vindication (as seen at the beginning of this note) of those clearly reactionary features of the new "populist" currents.

The *Telos* Conference at Cooper Union seems thus to set a new landmark in the ideological trajectory of the journal, placing it at a crossroads. But, beyond the (very) peculiar forms that they assume in the specific case of *Telos*, such a problematic orientation adopted by it, in an ultimate analysis, is revealing of the tribulations of the American Left at large, and the difficulties that it finds in defining a political space proper and exclusive to it. Despite the fact that *Telos* does not seem very successful in this regard, its attempt to articulate a critical discourse of liberal progressivism which could not be taken as, or confused with, a form of crypto-fascism continues to be a perfectly legitimate endeavor. There are, indeed, in *Telos*'s polemic intervention, some aspects which go forward in that direction. Its critique of *affirmative action* (especially, in academia),[14] although very "anti-politically correct" (something that tells us a lot about the intellectual bravery of its editors, who have the merit of challenging the vocabulary in vogue, when it would be much more comfortable for them to complacently follow it, as all others do in academia), tends to point to the fact that *affirmative action* actually propped up the emergence of a new elite "of color," which not only enriched itself but also provided an institutionalized channel of expression to those minorities on behalf of whom they can speak, but by no means has this served to improve the situation of minorities as a whole. On the contrary, in the more than 20 years of existence of affirmative action (this was established, on a national level, by. . . Richard Nixon!) their living conditions have worsened to the point of becoming alarming to the very functioning and self-reproduction of the system. Seen in this light, the Democrats' defense of *affirmative action* can hardly be regarded as socially progressive. Very different cases are those of the *welfare system* and of the rights of immigrants, the defense of which concern the most marginal sectors of the population in the US (since its dismantling would immediately affect their life and situation). Not by chance, Democrats and Republicans converge in attacking them (Clinton has begun the systematic dismantling of the welfare system). However,

14. Cf. "Special Section on Affirmative Action in Academia," *Telos* 86 (Winter, 1990-91).

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the Democrats' banner of the defense of *affirmative action* still serves to align electorally those self-alleged "progressive" forces behind its candidates: before the attacks of the Republican Right, it sounds logical for even the most radical defender of "multiculturalism" to vote for Democratic candidates.

The American two-party system still shows itself able to preempt all spaces for the development of an independent political alternative (and "multicultural" discourse does not provide any way out of it: the more radical a defender of "multiculturalism" — by whatever means necessary — one is, the more urgent it would seem, when the moment comes, to vote for Democrats). This mechanism of institutionalized political polarization (legally guaranteed by a very exclusionist electoral system) was what literally strangled the electoral space of the *People's Party* in 1896, and it also is, in a last instance, what nowadays prevents the articulation of a "neopopulist" movement into an independent political alternative. In fact, *Telos*'s proposal, with its indiscriminate attack on *affirmative action*, the *welfare system,* and the rights of immigrants, distances it from the Democrats, only to end up confusing it with (although the term was declared obsolete by *Telos*) the Republican Right represented by Pat Buchanan. Thus *Telos*'s slippery move to the Right actually "performatively contradicts" (to use Habermas' term) what has become, according to the editors of *Telos*, their main goal of today: to prove that "the critique of liberalism is not [necessarily] crypto-fascism".[15] On the contrary, it seems to performatively confirm that it would be so. But the point here is that *Telos*' proposal, besides not being leftist at all, can hardly make room for the emergence of a "Third Party" able to compete with the big traditional electoral machines. Thus, *Telos* seems to be destined, like the rest of the Left it has abandoned, to be torn by the traditional options of the American political order. In order to elaborate a political profile, i.e., a discourse critical of traditional liberalism that could not be confused with another form of "crypto-fascism," it is necessary for *Telos* to establish a number of distinctions, such as differentiating *affirmative action* from the *welfare system* and the rights of immigrants. But, in turn, this would entail a major revision of its notion of those idealized "organic communities" to which its discourse is supposedly destined or, at least, has as its subject-matter, which would simply amount to the collapse of its "populist" concept. *Telos* has placed itself in the middle of a road; either alternative path open to it — its coalescence with the Republican Right or re-orientation of its discourse to a "leftist" option — would inevitably entail a radical ideological maneuver which, at this point in the ideological evolution of *Telos*, could not be realized without generating a new crisis in this journal. In its almost thirty years of existence, *Telos* has survived other crises and surely it can overcome this one. It is not clear, however, how, and to what new paths this will lead. At any rate, it will be interesting to find it out.

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15. Piccone and Ulmen, "Introduction," *op. cit.*, p. 12.

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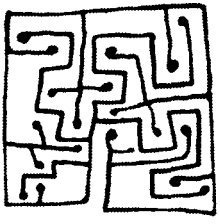

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Immigration between Liberalism and Populism: Reply to Palti

Russell A. Berman

Elías José Palti is simply wrong when he asserts that *Telos* officially supports California's Proposition 187; it is true, however, that the journal has published some differentiated statements regarding 187 which, more significantly, try to posit the theoretical and political grounds of a possible immigration policy. Palti leaps to equate nuanced deliberation with unqualified support. Clearly there are many perspectives and aspects of the discussion. Yet, for Palti, the real scandal is that *Telos*, which he describes as a "self-designated 'progressive'" journal, has broken ranks with what he presumes to be the only possible 'leftist' response to 187, i.e., complete and unqualified rejection. If there is a surprise here, it is Palti's naiveté and blindness to the sort of political exploration *Telos* has always been willing to undertake. For decades, the journal has broken with orthodox Left positions: in the criticism of East European socialism (at a time when the US left could not have cared less about dissidents), in the willingness to discuss the legitimacy of NATO armament in the missile debates of the early 1980s, to consider the Gulf War objectively, and, more recently, populism, affirmative action, and, yes, Proposition 187. Given the theoretical complexity of the arguments launched in the journal (and the sometimes cantankerousness of contributors), one should be careful in assigning one-dimensional or 'sound-bite' style positions to the journal. Yet, with that caveat in mind, it is the case that *Telos* has taken up issues and lines of thought that are simply beyond the pale for the garden variety Left. That should surprise no reader of the journal, but perhaps Palti has not been reading very closely.

If it were only a case of poor reading, the matter would hardly be worth addressing. There is, however, more at stake: Palti's irritation that a journal he accuses of "self-postulating" as "progressive" might entertain politically incorrect notions tells us more about self-postulated progressives (among whom one might count Palti) than about *Telos*. It tells us, for instance, that Palti presumes there are clear limits to debate, impassible borders around permissible dogma, and an injunction against non-conformism. Thus rather than taking issue with the broader issue of populism and analyzing the key topics, he denounces the journal's discussion altogether, treating it as a particular mode of ideological deviance. Instead of explaining why this or that *Telos* author is wrong with his own particular arguments, he tries to invent a story of how the whole group, imagined

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to be a coherent sect, went wrong in the past. This genealogical diagnosis presumes that there is somewhere a clear party line away from which the *Telos* "Right" has strayed: back into the fold, we are told, or face reeducation. It is reassuring that some traditions are quite stable, even within the "progressive" camp.

Speaking for the Left, Palti recoils in horror at the thought that national borders might in any way regulate travel and population shifts, for this is the underlying issue in the 187 controversy. Yet his rhetoric betrays a deep-seated imperative to draw borders and to guard clear party identities. "No crossings," Palti seems to command, "or else we'll shoot." This is why his article is driven less by an engagement with the issues than with a need to demonstrate that a "progressive" journal could not possibly adopt certain positions he considers *verboten*. There are, in Palti's imagination, clear and unambiguous positions of Right and Left: no complexity on either side and certainly no border-crossings. It is a dogmatic worldview blessed with all the suppleness of East German border patrol — one which would like to squelch any discussion before it starts. Any nuance, any non-PC reflection, is immediately targeted, labelled and denounced, obviating the need for engagement with uncomfortable ideas. So armed with a fanatic devotion to open borders with Mexico, Palti guards ideological borders with military precision.

Aside from this example of intolerant liberalism (another instance of the familiar dialectic of enlightenment), there are important issues at stake in the Proposition 187 discussion. To avoid misunderstandings, in my view, the proposition as it stands is bad legislation and will hopefully not be enforced. It is bad for several reasons, perhaps most obviously the calamitous consequences it could have for public health. If some population groups, i.e., illegal immigrants, are discouraged or even prohibited from adequate medical care, the likelihood of consequences for the wider population is high. While 187 proponents insist (dubiously) that a denial of benefits will reduce the incentives to migrate to California, surely all California residents have an overriding interest in making sure that changes in public policy do not have deleterious consequences for the life of the community. A similar argument can be made regarding the related suggestion that children of illegal immigrants be barred from public education: whether or not such a sanction would have an impact on the flow of immigrants into California, it would certainly undercut the education of a segment of the real population, which cannot be good, either in terms of the quality of the work force in the state or in terms of the importance of maintain a literate citizenry. Focussed on the imagined impact of the flow of immigrants, the proponents of 187 never thought through the other consequences the proposition might have.

If 187 is explicitly about the status of illegal immigrants, it is nearly as explicitly about relations between the state of California an the federal government. California governor Wilson, whose political aspirations inspired the proposition, has been quite direct about this: if the federal government does not enforce its own laws on the border, i.e., when the federal government does not live up to

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its constitutional responsibility to carry out legitimate immigration policy, it is primarily the states who are left paying for the consequences, footing the bill for social programs, often federally mandated, even for recipients who are present only due to the federal failure. One can, of course, oppose 187 for all of the social policy reasons suggested above, and still empathize with the quandary facing state governments. In other words, more interesting than pragmatic objections to 187, the proposition should be seen in the larger political-theoretical terms of the crises of the American federal system (and therefore part of the terrain of the *Telos* populism discussion) and not only as evidence of the racism Palti sensationally underscores. Social programs are costly for the states, and the prospects of tax increases are slim indeed; it is not hard to understand why states will want to make sure about the eligibility of all benefits claimants.

Nevertheless, despite this argument regarding budgetary limitations within the federal system — an argument that would lead to support for 187 — the proposition, from a populist standpoint, would in fact have a far from welcome impact on federalism. Despite the anti-Washington rhetoric associated with the proponents of 187, the consequence of the legislation would hardly promote a greater empowerment of the states. As it is written, the result of its institutionalization would be, on the contrary, to transform broad tiers of state employees into agents of federal immigration policy: health care workers, teachers and other state employees would face obligations to report on individuals suspected of breaking federal law, i.e., immigration law. It is hardly a case of populist decentralization if it is based on a federal deputization of state officials The proposition does not attempt to seize control of the definition or administration of immigration law from the federal government; it only insists that immigration law, which will continue to be a purview of the federal government, be enforced and it places greater responsibility for that enforcement on state employees.

Thus the result of 187 would include a much greater level of general policing, a great leap forward in state power, as experienced by the population, but no real shift of power from the federal to the state or local government. Moreover, if one imagines that these state employees carrying out the 187 mandate would have to devote some portion of their time to the enforcement of federal law, it is perfectly obvious that these new obligations will either require additional state employees, or they will further undermine the quality of the other tasks carried out by the state. The teacher who has to spend one hour a week in 187-related matters will spend close to one forty-hour week during a school year, and those missing forty hours, multiplied across the state system, will leave quite a hole. More teachers will have to be employed, or the students will receive less attention. In the end the poor construction of 187 undermines its own intention: trying to escape the budgetary consequences of the nonenforcement of federal immigration policy, it would end up internalizing those costs into the state budget — another burden for state tax-payers, or another factor undercutting the quality of state services. Immigration policy is surely not immune to the dreary logic of trade-offs.

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These grounds for opposing 187 are admittedly unlikely to please Left-liberal opinion, as represented by Palti. These are, on the contrary, arguments which ultimately derive from the set of issues which have been discussed in *Telos* under the rubric of populism. The government should refrain from policies which undermine the quality of life of communities; the policing and administrative power of government in general should be limited and reduced; power, reduced in general, should be decentralized to states and local communities. All these quite populist tenets lead to a clear rejection of 187, but on terms very different from those which Palti attributes to the Left, which argues with reference to a general focus on "racism," the priority of abstract individual rights, and the benevolent role of state power in guaranteeing "progress." So while Palti tries to cast the matter as a debate over 187, he could not be more wrong. The debate is over differing views of politics, particularly with regard to an underlying concern with the category of community. If some *Telos* authors have sometimes found themselves sympathetic to aspects of 187, it is because of the way the debate over the proposition has raised issues of community and federalism, no matter how deeply flawed the proposition itself may be. With this in mind, we should proceed to the core issue, and avoid Palti's decoys, i.e., racism, etc.

Is it ever proper for a community to restrict membership, specifically in terms of some limitation on or selection criteria for new members? The interesting issue in the debate over 187 is the very possibility for any immigration policy and the articulation of the sorts of grounds on which such a policy might be based. In other words, one can find plenty of faults with 187 and draw some political conclusions regarding its undesirably as law, but nevertheless pose the question as to the substance of immigration policy in general. Unfortunately, much of the Left-liberal discussion has suggested that the notion of "illegal immigration" is itself problematic, clearly (if unintentionally) implying that no immigration should be illegal and that all immigration should be considered either explicitly legal or, more consistently, effectively outside of legality altogether. Just as the government does not restrict citizen mobility within the US, it should not restrict any mobility into or outside of the US. In this spirit, freedom of travel appears as an inalienable human right, which the government should not infringe. Indeed, the government should be obliged to eliminate any barriers to mobility or community membership, such as residency requirements, expectations of economic standing or considerations of prior political or even criminal records.

There is something attractive about such a consistently anarchistic position on immigration. It would simply get the government out of the business of population regulation altogether. The refugee from war or persecution, the immigrant laborer seeking a better livelihood, cosmopolitan professionals with degrees and cash, but also war criminals, drug dealers and Kurt Waldheim: none would be quite welcome, but none would be turned away, since the government would simply no longer care, once we had decided to abolish the INS "as we know it."

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If, as Palti suggests, restrictions on immigrations are in principle wrong, this is the consistent conclusion, and it would have been intriguing to hear him argue its advantages. For it is surely not a self-evidently leftist position, one of Palti's *desiderata*, since it would likely have the effect of depressing wages in at least some sectors; but this is why the labor movement, historically a not insignificant part of the Left, has often argued for immigration restrictions, while business interests have regularly welcomed lower-paid immigrant workers. Palti unfortunately does not address the inherent conflict between the liberal goal of unrestricted mobility and the alternative interest, which one could describe as leftist, or democratic, or social, or simply populist in maintaining or improving wage levels. Of course this particular issue is not only a matter of supply and demand in the labor force. To the extent that citizenship or, more typically, residence includes particular social benefits, then any lowering of the entry barrier will place greater demands on societal resources and soon elicit political calls to reduce program costs or to restrict the clientele. In other words, given limited resources and practical limitations on taxation, there is a built in tension between unrestricted immigration and levels of wages or social benefits.

Yet conflicts like this tarnish the transparency of the libertarian utopia of open borders, as appealing as it may be, and a more complex field of political and theoretical issues emerges. Public policy entails efforts to respond to particular social exigencies and immigration policy involves considerations of the consequences of population flows. Unless one sets the freedom of that flow as the sole goal of politics — hardly a likely position — then one enters the realm of possible restrictions, in which conjectures must be made regarding potential population movement in the future and the impacts of new populations on existing communities. Furthermore, the value of preserving or modifying those communities, their identities and their institutional structures, has to be considered as an integral part of the discussion.

In fact, even opponents of 187 regularly invoke the historical cultural character of the community, when they make a certain argument for open immigration; because the US is a nation of immigrants, the claim is made that an adoption of an anti-immigration stance (even a stance opposed only to illegal immigration) would represent a betrayal of national identity. The implication is that the historical legacy of the past should be carried on as a determinant of contemporary policy; in order to be true to ourselves and our provenance, no restrictions should be placed on immigration. It is an interesting claim indeed, since it suggests, in the manner of an almost Burkean conservatism, that precedent and the traditions of the past should be accorded priority in discussions of contemporary affairs. Of course, it is easy to point out that hostility to immigration also has a long history and might equally be regarded as part of traditional culture in the US, at which point some mode of adjudication between competing traditions, but not competing principles, would have to be carried out. More important, however, is the

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larger frame of the argument, i.e., the assumption that the historical character of the community (in this case, its historical involvement with immigration) has considerable significance for the life of the community in the present.

The suggestion that historical character defines or should define the present ought not be taken to mean that nothing changes, and that the structures of the past are fully adequate and proper for perpetuity. That sort of claim, an absolute reification of history, would genuinely disenfranchise the present, stifling life under the weight of the past: therefore the mere appeal to an American past of immigration is not adequate demonstration of the propriety of unrestricted immigration in the present. A more dialectic relation between past and present is called for, one in which deliberations in the present refer to and reflect upon past experiences and identities, preserving them where desirable and improving them where necessary. It is this reflective relation to the past which is at the heart of any genuine traditionalism, a productive backward looking rather than a rigid fixation on historical forms.

If the historical character of a community remains a desirable component in present political life, then the preservation of certain traditions as well as the response to particular legacies may well occupy public life. In that case it is not only possible but imperative that entry into the community be made dependent on defined criteria, including a willingness and a capacity to participate in this relation to the past. No matter what the grounds for the immigrants' decision to move, it ought to be possible for the receiving country to expect that an existential involvement with the new home ensue, a recognition of obligations to new neighbors (citizens or not) as well as to the past that pervades the institutions. To be sure, these institutions can change and grow, but they will do so more organically to the extent that their emergence from particular experiences is understood and not forgotten. In other words, immigration becomes more than a relocation within empty space, a human right to travel without any further responsibilities; it becomes instead an opportunity to enter into another collective memory (no matter how complex and dynamic) and to assume the obligations of participate in a new community.

This insistence on the substance of community, especially its historical dimension, can be taken to be at odds with the ideal of total mobility advocated by Palti. At the very least, this model of community membership implies the notion of citizenship classes: citizens are asked to acquire certain basic knowledge in order to participate in the body politic, and the importance of this knowledge is very different from the assumption underlying the liberal model of abstract individuals with abstract rights moving through empty space. Yet, Palti or other advocates of free-trade in immigrants should object that even these citizenship classes, as limited as their goals may be, may represent a hurdle and a hardship for new potential members of the political community. Does not the insistence that immigrants be able to read or have familiarity with aspects of American history entail a restriction on motion, a loyalty test ultimately at odds

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the insistence that immigrants be able to read or have familiarity with aspects of American history entail a restriction on motion, a loyalty test ultimately at odds with first amendment rights? In fact, if Palti were consistent he would not only object to 187; he should be objecting to the very distinction between citizens and aliens as evidence of nativist discrimination, according to some sets of individuals greater benefits than to others. If, in contrast, the model of the populist community is taken as the basis for deliberation, then the urgency of both personal history — how long has one lived here and one's commitment — as well as cross-generational obligations and traditions permit a distinction to be made as well as an elaboration of a substantive notion of citizenry.

The question of resource distribution is equally important in theoretical terms and more explosive in political terms. Does not the allocation of resources to address historical legacies divert funds to the community of the past and therefore discriminate against new arrivals? And does not such discrimination also entail a sort of barrier against immigration? Why should heirs to older generations of citizens receive support in a way withheld from immigrants?

Precisely this tension was highlighted in the debate over another California proposition, 209, the so-called anti-affirmative action initiative. Of course, by and large, the discussions around 187 and 209 were quite similar with liberals lining up against conservatives in much the same way. However, if the opponents of 187 effectively argued for unrestricted immigration and therefore for equal rights for immigrants, legal or not, the opposition to 209 was regularly based on the urgency of what was perceived as correcting historical injustice. In other words, proposition 209 was attacked on the grounds that the affirmative action policies which it intends to eliminate are necessary to repair damage to the social fabric deriving from historical patterns of discrimination. Let us leave aside the question regarding whether historical injustice can be corrected as well as other criticisms of affirmative action. As with 187, there are many more pragmatic aspects of the affirmative action debate. The point here is simply that the defense of affirmative action was frequently based on a historical claim: the need to address the consequences of past custom and policy. Yet this focus on the American past or, more precisely, this potential allocation of resources in terms of the perception of American history necessarily implies directing certain funding to particular groups, the targeted minorities. Affirmative action benefits are not made available to various groups, including of course "majority" whites but also, and more interestingly, new immigrants as well those ethnic groups not defined as targets of the policy. With regard to new immigrants, affirmative action typically withholds such status from recent arrivals, since they are by definition not heirs to an American past of discrimination, i.e., the new immigrant from Africa does not have a claim on the affirmative action status accorded to an African-American, or a Latin American immigrant is disadvantaged in relation to a Mexican-American. In other words, the policy basically pits immigrants against citizens, viewed as

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heirs to a national history which the legislation is intended to address and in effect constructs an uneven playing field if not a genuine barrier against immigration.

This historicity of affirmative action as subtly hostile to immigration underlies deep splits between ethnic groups viewed (more incorrectly than correctly) as unequally victims of historical discrimination. Hence the bitter opposition of part of the Asian-American population against aspects of affirmative action, especially in terms of education, e.g., in the admission policy to public institutions, such as UC Berkeley. Groups regarded as victims of historical discrimination — African-Americans, Mexican-Americans and Native Americans — are accorded affirmative action status; Asian-Americans, viewed more as successful immigrants, are denied it. Of course, the distinction is absurd, and if the aspect of historical discrimination were taken seriously, then surely Asian-Americans in California ought to qualify. Yet this is not the place to undertake the impossible task of working through the internal inconsistencies in affirmative action policy. Affirmative action is relevant to the immigration debate because it stands as an example of policy based (wisely or not) on community history and which, therefore, entails a privileging of groups defined as historical and a disadvantaging of immigrants In fact, any insistence that current policy derive from and engage the past, either to preserve or modify it, may easily be at odds with a vision of a society defined in the presentist terms of abstract individual rights. Palti's absolute commitment to open immigration should lead him, were he consistent, to opposition to affirmative action.

Immigration policy is of such importance to the theoretical debate because it is a key location of the legal definition of community. The manner in which new membership in the community is defined implies the terms on which the community exists. The libertarian model of absolutely open borders and a state agnosticism on immigration would have the distinct advantage of reducing police powers, but it would also redefine public life as any arbitrary collection of individuals with no common history, value, or language, which is not to say that history, values, and language need be fully identical, but that a society marked by no collective identity represents one quite extreme case. It is, in any case, the logical outcome of the proposal to abolish distinctions between legal and illegal immigrants. In contrast, current policy, by distinguishing between citizens and other members of the population (i.e., resident aliens, permanent residents, tourists) does accord a privileged status to those born in the US or those who have met some criteria in order to acquire citizenship. The implication is that either through birth or through the naturalization process a minimal commonality in community membership is achieved. For an advocate of total mobility, even this distinction must be seen as a barrier. For a proponent of the populist community, citizenship can be taken as a recognition of the substance of a potentially common identity and a concession that residence in the US and access to benefits is not a human right but a right restricted to certain groups on grounds derived from birth or naturalization. The status of this possible restriction is what separates the populist position from liberalism on 187.

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Because of the populist insistence on a substantive understanding of community identity, the prominence of birth criteria in immigration policy is not problematic: community and family are not identical, but they are surely closely related. If birth on US territory is the most common route to citizenship, it is of course not a necessary one. More interesting is the possibility of gaining legal entry to the country through family ties to resident aliens or naturalized citizens, and this principle testifies to a recognition of the value of family as part of the social fabric. Here too, populism has no grounds for objection. Liberalism, however, should object, since it accords benefits to some (family members) which are denied to others and therefore represents a case of unequal protection. More important, however, and, for liberalism, presumably more offensive, is that it establishes a principle of family values as prior to abstract rights.

Ultimately, liberalism will remain unwilling to countenance policy, legislation, or institutions that accord advantages to some individuals over others: home court advantage will be treated as an infringement of equal rights. If it is permissible for individuals to make contributions to political campaigns, there is no principled reason to exclude some individuals on the basis of their foreign citizenship. If it is permissible to engage in commercial activity, there is no principled reason to establish community standards for labor practices or ecology which might exclude foreign businesses. The open borders principle in immigration and in GATT are equally at odds with the specific needs and autonomy of local communities. Of course, in practice this free-trade model will benefit certain groups, among them mobile and highly educated professionals who have the sophistication and training to find their ways through different cultures. The populist alternative to this free-market liberalism is not to retreat into autochthonous enclaves but to insist on a rethinking of the terms of immigration and free-trade in ways that would accord appropriate value to the substance of communities as carriers of complex histories and identities. This is, however, not just a matter of immigration law but of the viability of heterogeneous communities as ways of human life around the world. The liberal utopia of the total mobilization of the working population in a transnational economy may not be a done deal yet.

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Proposition 187:Rejoinder to Palti

Thomas Fleming

In my original statement on Proposition 187 and in the subsequent commentary, there are several discrete issues which, to be understood, must be separated. In the context of the original article on democracy, my statement is nothing more than an affirmation of a people's right to make decisions for itself and a repudiation of the elitist despotism of the federal courts. Elías José Palti, however, would like to construe the statement as an expression of 1) opposition to immigration from Mexico, 2) of a desire to maintain the ethnic *status quo* in California and the US, and 3) an explicitly racist theory of ethnic hierarchy. But anyone who has followed the immigration debate at all cannot fail to be aware that none of these positions follow from any of the others. One might affirm the people's right to make choices, without approving the people's choice, and one can wish to limit immigration on strictly pragmatic and economic grounds without expressing a preference for ethnic or cultural types and, finally, one might wish to preserve a given ethnic *status quo* without necessarlly believing that one's own group is better than any other. Jean Raspail, for example, wrote an apocalyptic novel about Third World immigration to Europe. On the other hand, he has written with equal fervor to denounce the effects of European colonization in Patagonia. As a proponent of federalism, I have always held that people have a right to make their own mistakes and that it is never legitimate for an outsider to make decisions for other people, particularly when he does not have to bear the burden of the consequences. Mr. Palti, like federal judges, thinks he knows better, and sees nothing wrong in imposing his will or a judge's will on people he disagrees with. There are names for this attitude, none of them very pleasant, and they are the very names Mr. Palti would like to fix upon his ideological adversaries: elitist, authoritarian and bigoted are the first three that come to mind.

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The Tribulations of Left Social Criticism: Reply to Palti

Paul Piccone

The Incoherence of Left Conservatism

It is no news that the official Left, entrenched primarily in academia, has grown complacent and conservative as it has achieved a modicum of political power.[1] This turn of events requires no elaborate explanation in terms of, e.g., *inevitable necessities such as the capitulation to the various disciplines' obsession* with "scientificity" or scholarly rigor — as unreconstructed social-democrats would have it.[2] Along with all garden-varieties of complacent conservatism, it is merely a matter of instrumentalizing ideas, whether wrapped in an

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1. See Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York, Basic Books, 1987); and *Dogmatic Wisdom: How the Culture Wars Divert Education and Distract America* (New York: Doubleday, 1994). For an elaboration of some of the themes in these books, see "Symposium on Russell Jacoby's *Dogmatic Wisdom*," in *Telos* 97 (Fall 1993), pp. 85-120.

2. Alan Wolfe, *Marginalized in the Middle* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 18ff. While Wolfe grudgingly acknowledges the increasing conformism and complacency of what passes as "Left social criticism," he sees this phenomenon and the related rise of a much more aggressive "Right social criticism" as part of a cyclic pattern whereby Left and Right alternate as society's conscience. Unintendedly, Wolfe's own account provides supporting evidence for his thesis concerning the growing conservatism and self-serving shortsightedness of Left social criticism. Not only is he unable to think beyond the obsolescent Left-Right dichotomy as the only possible political paradigm, but he also ends up buying into a view of criticism as "cyclic," thus presupposing the indefinite permanence of a political *status quo* fluctuating between "conservative" and "liberal" phases. This, more than any other particular political position, betrays the extent to which he and the conventional Left have abandoned the traditional eschatology whereby the projection of a qualitatively different future (rather than the inevitable return of a new phase of Left social hegemony) historically provided the critical fulcrum for the indictment of what, in comparison, turns out to be an utterly inadequate present. However, without such a *novum* (to use Ernst Bloch's term), all criticism degenerates into what Wolfe himself calls "realism" which, at best, given its pretended axiological neutrality, can only analyze all structural and non-structural flaws as anomalies within an otherwise sound system, thereby relegitimating it as "second nature." Repackaged as a conflict between "romanticism" and "realism," the old "revolution" vs. "reform" split within the Left is once again opportunistically resolved in favor of the latter by intellectuals interested more in legitimating social criticism as a profession than in "truth" and "justice."

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academic aura of "methodological rigor" or not, to defend hidden or not-so-hidden particularistic agendas. Social being may not always determine social consciousness, but when it does not, it is usually because of confusion or bad faith, or both — as in the case of self-righteous appeals to an abstract universalism concealing otherwise pedestrian particularistic interests. Thus there is nothing extraordinary about the Left's increasingly frequent defense of existing relations of dominations by mediatizing "the underdogs" as advocates of a statism privileging a New Class of which Left academics have now become an integral part.

As is often the case, the first victims of conservative involutions of this kind are intellectual clarity and political coherence. Thus, ideas become ideological weapons which, in gaining symbolic value, lose substantive content — to the point that practically anything can fill the resulting semantic vacuum. As a result, it is no longer a matter of determining what is desirable or undesirable, right or wrong, but simply of defeating "the enemy," defined as those who disagree with the official line. It does not matter that "the enemy" deploys arguments previously developed by the Left itself, or subscribes to roughly similar values: he is automatically demonized as "conservative," "right-wing" or, in the more extreme cases, a "fascist," "racist" and "reactionary." This polemical strategy is doomed to fail not only because of its inherent crassness, but, first and foremost, because all of these disparaging labels have either become meaningless or inapplicable.

Consider the charge of "right-wing" deviation. To the extent that, even more than its Left counterpart, the Right has long since disintegrated into irreconcilable neoconservative, paleoconservative, libertarian, New Right, etc. factions,[3] it is meaningless and politically irresponsible to brand someone a "right-winger" without any further qualifications. Already terminally splintered before 1989, when it was still barely held together by a "fusionism" predicated on anti-communism, the American Right lost all hope of unity after this totalizing objective disappeared with the end of the Cold War and the final delegitimation of all versions of "totalitarian" communism. Today, following the disintegration of the Right,[4] "right-wing" charges reduce, at best, to the indictment of a general attitude toward life: a never-clearly-spelled-out intimation of "conservatism" broadly understood as a vague tendency to defend existing privileges and allegedly unjust

3. See Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*, revised edition (New York,: Twayne Publishers, 1993); and Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of American Conservatism," in *Telos* 74 (Winter 1987-88), pp. 3-30.

4. This internal disintegration could not have been more obvious in the 1996 presidential election when, after The Republicans' quixotic efforts to recycle Reagan's old strategy — the fiscally irresponsible 15% across the board tax cut — the only issue differentiating the official Right from the official Left was one of "character." For an account of this collapse, already prefigured in the San Diego Convention, see Samuel Francis, "Suicide of the Right," in *Chronicles* (November 1996), pp. 40-41. Only Left intellectuals still write about Republicans and the Right as if homogeneous entities of the kind still existed. See Wolfe, *op. cit.*, pp. 233ff.

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social relations. While such charges may have made sense against the Right during the heyday of the New Deal and the Great Society, when it seemed opposed to all change, today they are no longer applicable. If the American Right can be said to stand for anything at this point in time, it is the radical *reform* of most current government policies: *opposition* to the post-New Deal *status quo* and predominant power relations predicated on administrative authority. As a result, especially in the last decade, it has been the Left, however broadly defined, which has defended predominant social relations and existing state-mandated privileges. Whether in the case of the welfare state, the system of public education, labor relations, etc., opposition to change almost always comes from the official Left. Thus, e.g., no matter how "affirmative action" is evaluated, it is *existing* policy, i.e., the *status quo*, and, for whatever reasons, it does *privilege* a sector of the population over another.[5] In this case, as well as others, if any side of political opinion can be labeled "conservative," it is clearly the Left.[6]

The reason why the official Left still regards itself as "progressive" and its opposition as "conservative" no longer has anything to do with "seeking change" or defending existing social relations — as one might suppose by adhering to standard linguistic usage. Rather, these self-righteous designations are predicated

5. The *conservative* character of defenses of affirmative action programs is not limited to the fact that they are *existing* policy. More importantly, they have managed to bring about only minimal diversification in the higher ranks of the present system of social stratification by increasing minority presence, while retaining predominant political and economic relations responsible for the social pathologies they were meant to remedy. Thus it is no accident that affirmative action has not resulted in any major improvement in the general condition of minorities (disproportionately mired in the ranks of the underclass), while benefiting primarily women (mostly well-off whites) and middle-class members of minorities. Opportunistically, the latter tend not only to immediately distance themselves from the bureaucratically-ascribed social category to which they happen to belong and which makes them eligible for privileged treatment, but also to become the most vocal advocates for current affirmative action programs, predominant administrative practices and traditional relations of domination. For a critical evaluation of recent literature on the subject, see Hugh Murray, "More on Affirmative Action," in *Telos* 106 (Winter 1996), pp. 179-194. Worse yet, focused on individual upward social mobility, along with all other liberal policies privileging individuals, affirmative action policies tend to weaken those community and family bonds which have historically provided the main support for the eventual assimilation and social emancipation of ethnic minorities in the US. Here, as is increasingly becoming the case everywhere, it is a matter of the vindication and reconfiguration of *traditional* social relations which promises change, rather than the retention of more recent social engineering measures whose main impact has been to relegitimate a crisis-ridden *status quo*. On the potentially radical role of tradition in general, see David Gross, *The Past in Ruins: Tradition and the Critique of Modernity* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992).

6. As Wolfe puts it: "the left has become as conservative as the Republicans have become radical, protecting existing jobs, fearing innovation, preferring the imperfect status quo to a world in which an emphasis on greater responsibility would be accompanied by greater risk." *Op. cit.*, p. 234.

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on the acceptance of a metaphysical dogma it otherwise claims to have rejected: a unilinear theory of history plotting "progress" along an increasingly indefensible enthymimetic historical-materialist trajectory positing state-imposed equality as inherently superior to, and more advanced than, the kind of unintended inequality resulting from exercising the freedom made possible by the legal guarantees associated with capitalist market relations. Consequently, any preference for the latter at the expanse of the former is automatically labelled "conservative" or, even in cases of challenges to allegedly counterproductive redistributive or remedial state policies meant to bring about administrative equalization, "reactionary," since these challenges are seen as seeking to restore a *status quo ante* presumably gone once and for all.

This "progressive metaphysics," long since exposed as grounded on otherwise explicitly rejected theological dogma,[7] has been further delegitimated by the dismal results of 20th century efforts to bring about equality through social engineering. The experiences of "really existing socialism" in the former Soviet empire, or even of the much more moderate social democracy of Western Europe, have resulted not only in economic dysfunctions and new forms of state-mandated inequality, but also in increasingly unacceptable limitations on personal freedom. Today all Western societies, which in the past half century have sought to buffer the destructive economic dislocations brought about by rapid modernization and reckless capitalist development by developing various versions of the welfare state, are confronted with unintended new cultural and political conflicts[8] — conflicts impervious to the standard economistic remedies the Left still uncritically deploys as the snake-oil for all possible social ills.

The Left itself has been the victim of its own economistic dogmatism and is now confronted with the same new cultural and political contradictions affecting society at large. Thus it is not an accident that the traditional Left's "progressive

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7. This view was already discredited in the later part of the 19th century by Nietzsche's and other existential critiques of modernity. It was systematically demolished in the 1920s by J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth* (New York: Dover Publications, 1987 — originally published in 1924). See also R. G. Collingwood's convincing, although unfinished, *The Idea of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994 — originally published in 1946). For a more recent critique of this "progressive metaphysics, see Christopher Lasch's *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: Norton, 1991).

8. Even less interventionist liberal democracies now find themselves in this predicament, as government efforts at social engineering generate new modes of inequality, restrict personal freedom and tendentially bankrupt the state. See Paul Piccone, "Secession or Reform? The Case of Canada," in *Telos* 106 (Winter 1996), pp. 15-63. The situation in Italy — the only country with a proportionately higher national debt than Canada — is even more precarious. The recent meteoric rise of secessionist movements is the direct result of frustrations with the failure of standard efforts to reform, decentralize and downsize a bloated, inefficient and wasteful central state. See the special section on "The Leagues in Italy," in *Telos* 90 (Winter 1991-1992), pp. 3-88.

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metaphysics" increasingly contradicts the new, fashionable, "multicultural" orientation. The relativism presupposed by multiculturalism is impossible to reconcile with the absolutism and Eurocentrism grounding the traditional Left's "progressivism." Today the Left has to choose between two equally unacceptable alternatives. It can remain "progressive" in the traditional Eurocentric sense defined by a terminally incoherent, secularized Christian theory of history of which the concept of progress is an inextricable part, or else it can go "multicultural" by dropping the old metaphysical groundings which have historically legitimated its claims to *universality* and provided it with a moral high ground. It cannot, however, remain "progressive" while rejecting its traditional roots — even if, in the age of modernity, universality is now seen as part of a particular cultural project. It can either opt for equality (in the traditional Christian, liberal or Marxist senses of homogeneity of souls, legal rights or economic status), in which case allegedly qualitative differences are automatically reduced to contingent social pathologies, i.e., deviation from an allegedly universal identity; or insist on the irreducibility of cultural differences and stop privileging Eurocentric concepts of "progress" and "equality." In both instances, the Left ends up in a "conservative" predicament: in the first case it finds itself allied with the Right in defending traditional European metaphysics, while in the second it undermines the very possibility of universally-valid "progressive" moral judgements by relegating *all* such judgements to expressions of particular cultural idiosyncrasies.

What is most surprising within this increasingly ambiguous political framework is that the Left's demonization of opponents takes place precisely at a time when ideological lines have become blurred, if not altogether obliterated, and the old political paradigm contraposing Left and Right no longer makes sense. Today what differentiates the official Right from the official Left in the US is, at best, minor disagreements concerning the role of the federal government — and even this minimalist distinction applies only to very recent reconfigurations of what both Left and Right stand for.[9] Historically, the Left has not been *always* statist. Only after the success of the Russian Revolution and the Western Left's opportunistic capitulation to the ubiquitous hegemony of Marxism-Leninism was the much more influential 19th century anarchist tradition forgotten by intellectuals interested more in power than in freedom and justice. The statist Jacobin tradition, which has become a kind of official Left trademark, was originally the outlook of the radical wing of the bourgeoisie and, as such, always under attack by the more rigorous sectors of the revolutionary Left, from Karl Marx to Rosa Luxemburg —

9. Even in Europe, after the gradual "greening" of the old Stalinists, then Eurocommunists, then social-democratic parties of the Left, today traditional Left critiques of, e.g., individualism, liberalism, "bourgeois culture," the destructive impact of market relations, social alienation and what used to be dismissed as "religious superstition," are systematically articulated only by the New Right, especially in France. See "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," in *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Spring 1994), pp. 188ff.; and Mark Wegierski, "The New Right in Europe," in the same issue, pp. 55-70.

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all the way down to council communists such as Karl Korsch, Paul Mattick, Anton Pannekoek, Herman Gorter, etc.[10] Jacobinism was initially bought lock, stock and barrel primarily by Marxist-Leninists and wannabe *apparatchiks* advocating democracy understood not in terms of the sovereignty of the people and their *real* interests but as the defense of the people's *objective* interests deduced from a mechanistic class-analysis and interpreted by an intellectual (usually Marxist-Leninist) elite.[11] Throughout the 19th century, before the Left became "professionalized" and dominated by intellectual elites, most radical Left critiques, from the anarchist to the Marxist, were predicated precisely on the fraudulent and hypocritical character of Jacobinism or "bourgeois rule" — a tradition which survives today in the "transversal" (i.e., neither Right nor Left) critique of New Class modes of domination. Only after the professionalization of the Left did

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10. Historically, it was the conservative aristocratic Right, especially after the bourgeoisie had secured economic (but not yet political) power in Western Europe, that sought to have the state enforce what it regarded as a "just" state of affairs (i.e., natural social hierarchies). The Left, whether in the guises of the ideology of the triumphant bourgeoisie or later working class movements, merely claimed to translate new power realities into juridical relations (i.e., force the obsolescent superstructure to reflect the new base). Statism became part and parcel of Left politics only within the Jacobin tradition and the institutionalization of legal positivism, after it became clear that events were not unfolding as expected and the Jacobins began to instrumentalize politics, an ineliminable dimension of social existence, as a means to help bring about collective "human happiness." Thus, they identified with the Promethean effort to defy the Gods, i.e., the natural predicament, and came to regard legal mandates as ethically warranted artificial means (social engineering) to correct natural "wrongs." Rawl's theory of justice is only the latest reformulation of this tradition. As in the original myth, however, these efforts invariably trigger unintended counterproductive consequences — the old wreath of the Gods. A more sophisticated Left, typified by the work of the original Frankfurt School, theorized the crisis of modernity, understood as the fragmentation of social being and social consciousness, as the modernist version of this wreath of the Gods. Not only did the members of this school see Fascism, Nazism, Communism and the New Deal (and 20th century catastrophes such as the Holocaust, WWII, etc.) as various late versions of the same Jacobin project and its failure, but they also sought to vindicate the Left's original eudemonic teleology through a "reconciliation with nature" or "mimesis," rather than through the domination and destruction typical of societies dichotomizing mind and body. This meant a return to the Platonic theory of justice according to which justice ceases to be the juridical homogenization of heterogeneous social components (identity logic) and, as in Sophocles' *Antigone*, becomes once again the re-establishment of continuity between the social and the natural. Here the natural dimension is no longer the traditional Scholastic construct reifying predominant social relations, but an ever changing precategorical horizon. Such an horizon cannot be readily manipulated by piecemeal social engineering. Thus, far from reestablishing some equitable *status quo ante*, the unintended consequences of state intervention usually intensify existing inequities. These positions, typical of the early Frankfurt School, remain part of a contradictory Left symbolized by, e.g., an ecology movement advocating "reconciliation with nature," but one often carried out through massive state intervention.

11. For a history of "libertarian" Marxism, see Frits Kool, "Einleitung" to Frits Kool, ed., *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft* (Olten: Walter-Verlag, 1970), pp. 11-164.

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"bourgeois" become identified with "capitalist" and all forms of political domination reduced to their economistic counterpart, thus concealing the New Class as the new ruling elite benefiting the most within the new statist framework.[12]

Illegal Immigration, Democracy and Culture

Elías José Palti seems to have fallen victim of this new "official Left" conformist mind-set when he interprets as part of a reactionary, racist agenda passing claims in the pages of *Telos* concerning the legitimacy of either defending cultural continuity or exercising direct democracy by means of popular referenda — passages suggesting to him support for California's allegedly "anti-minority" Proposition 187 (presumably limiting illegal immigrants' eligibility for social services). Palti implicitly assumes that the Left should be in favor of unlimited immigration, universal access to social benefits associated with citizenship, and multiculturalism. The Right, on the other hand, is allegedly xenophobic, exclusionary and racist — *at least in the sense of privileging its own particular community or society* over all others. Thus, any hint of limiting or selective immigration, safe-guarding cultural continuity and linking the delivery of public social services to citizenship or its functional equivalent is automatically branded as "right-wing" or even racist. Since some *Telos* contributors are in favor of referenda as expressions of grass-root democracy (thus allegedly paving the way for collective hysteria concerning illegal immigrants) and see resistance to assimilation in a developing organic culture as a threat to cultural continuity and community cohesion (an exclusionary concept), the journal must have become both reactionary and racist.

Yet, neither of the two passages Palti cites were a *direct* endorsement of Proposition 187. Both were more broadly meant to vindicate grass-root democracy and cultural self-determination through referenda, and to oppose New Class impositions of liberal mandates counter to widespread popular sentiments. Whatever one's reservations concerning Proposition 187 — and there are plenty of problems with this particular proposition as *actually* formulated — they cannot

12. See Gianfranco Miglio, *Una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni: Intevista sulla Terza Republica*, ed. by Marcello Staglieno (Bari: Laterza, 1990); and Paul Piccone, "Scapegoating Capitalism," in *Telos* 97 (Fall 1993), pp. 85-96. This distinction is crucial. In the mid-1980s the *Telos* editorial group split, among other things, over the question concerning whether the problem with modern society was its "capitalist" or its "bourgeois" character, i.e., whether it was primarily an economic or a political matter. The New Class wing, which eventually resigned, insisted on defending the validity of "civil society" and liberal values, seeing capitalism as the source of all problems and "radical intellectuals" as agents of collective emancipation (by means of social engineering and social-democratic state intervention in the economy), while what eventually became the "populist wing" emphasized the primacy of politics and culture, relegating capitalism and economic questions merely to an instrumental level. This explains the journal's subsequent interest in Carl Schmitt's political thought and the vindication of the repressed American populist tradition, rather than various reinterpretations of Marxism by obscure and long-forgotten splinter groups, as the real radical legacy in the US (the political embodiment of radical Protestantism).

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be predicated on the claim that it is either "racist" or anti-minorities. If Palti and other readers cannot distinguish between race — a biological category — and culture — a social one — there is not much one can do other than suggest a remedial course in Sociology 101 or its equivalent in Anthropology or Political Science. What the "Introduction" to *Telos* 104 claimed, as can be readily seen from the passage Palti quotes, was that, as long as there are national boundaries, even if, as is often the case, highly arbitrary ones,[13] it is necessary to have clear criteria concerning who should be allowed to come into a country and who should not. It is not entirely accidental that *all* countries have criteria of the kind. Such criteria can indeed be "racist," if they exclude people purely on the basis of race (as might have been the case with earlier immigration policies), as well as "right-wing" in the traditional sense, if predicated on, e.g., capitalist interests in keeping wage rates low by inflating the available labor pool, or maybe on maintaining a particular ethnic composition, irrespective of the assimilability of potential immigrants and their offsprings. There is nothing inherently racist or right-wing, however, in insisting on the cultural assimilability of newcomers and their children, or limiting their number in relation to what particular communities can readily accommodate or are willing to accept.

Local communities are not mere geographical locations but the product of efforts of previous generations of citizens in constructing social and political entities in particular ways, with specific characteristics. While all communities and societies are more or less demographically "porous," there are limits to the number of newcomers that can be integrated without causing considerable dysfunctions. Even the most egalitarian socialist systems must confront this predicament. Although not an exemplary egalitarian case, the "really existing socialism" of the Soviet Union was no exception to the rule. When, because of Stalin's and his successors' disastrous agricultural and industrial policies, it became much more desirable to live in Soviet cities rather than the countryside and, as a result, there was considerable migration from rural to urban centers, it became necessary for the state to devise explicit policies, such as an internal passport system,[14]

13. Questions as to what precisely constitutes a nation and the viability of such a political entity in the foreseeable future remain hotly contested within the pages of *Telos*. It is clear, however, that abstract internationalism (or cosmopolitanism) is neither the only alternative nor the most desirable one. See Telos Staff: "Nationhood, Nationalism and Identity: A Symposium," in *Telos* 105 (Fall 1995), pp. 77-111.

14. The results of this system, as contradictory as the present one in California, generated, with the scandal of the "limitchiks," a level of exploitation, dehumanization and instrumentalization even worse than that of "illegal aliens" in California. On the Soviet passport system, see Victor Zaslavsky and Yuri Lury, "The Passport System in the USSR and Changes in the Soviet Union," in *Soviet Union*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1979), pp. 137-153. See also Veljko Vujacic and Victor Zaslavsky, "The Causes of Disintegration in the USSR and Yugoslavia," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 120-140; and Victor Zaslavsky, *The Neo-Stalinist State: Class, Ethnicity and Consensus in Soviet Society* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 1982).

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to control demographic shifts. If, for whatever reasons, there are no *formal* exclusionary mechanisms, informal ones often take their place. Thus, when, as, e.g., in the case of Manhattan, there are no *legal* limitations to immigration from neighboring communities, states or even foreign nations, informal mechanisms (such as astronomical rents) tend to produce the same results and pathologies as when such regulatory mechanisms are in place. In a situation where there are no easy answers and plenty of contradictory interests at play, it is not unreasonable to defend community efforts to guarantee cultural continuity and a minimum of cohesion. Similarly, in liberal democracies where *liberal* ideals (often instrumentalized by dominant economic interests) clash with broad *democratic* aspirations, it is neither "racist" nor "reactionary" to defend the people's efforts to assert their sovereignty and defend their particular culture through the kind of direct democracy afforded by popular referenda — especially in a postmodern context where the status of essentialist traditional liberal ideals is all but clear.

At any rate, neither of the passages Palti cites as evidence for the *Telos* editors' or Tom Fleming's support of California's Proposition 187 actually do so, and for good reasons: far from merely dealing with denying illegal aliens social services, as the proposition is usually interpreted to mean, this proposition is primarily a statist ploy to turn all of California's public agencies providing social services into extensions of the US Immigration and Naturalization Services by mandating the compulsory *verification* and *reporting* of all illegal aliens applying for social services. This, in addition to allowing the venting of widespread popular resentment against increasingly unmanageable rates of illegal immigration, is Proposition 187's only real objective. That public social services should be limited only to those entitled to receive them seems immediately obvious. No referendum should be needed to emphasize a rather common-sensical state of affairs, and if legal strictures to that effect are presently being circumvented, as supporters of Proposition 187 rightly claim, it is not obvious that the results of such a referendum cannot be similarly checkmated by legalistic means, as it has in fact been the case since the passage of the proposition. This is not the place for an exhaustive review of Proposition 187. It is sufficient to point out that what seems to be primarily at stake in California is actually something other than whether the state should or should not provide services to those not legally entitled to them. It is a long-standing *jurisdictional* and fiscal dispute between the state and the federal government concerning regulating immigration, paying for related costs, etc. Thus the proposition does not simply reiterate the obvious, i.e., that illegality cannot be tolerated and must be proscribed, nor does it seek to re-empower local constituencies. Least of all does it directly deal with either limiting or expanding immigration quotas. Rather, it is primarily cannon-fodder in an inter-governmental squabble meant to coerce the federal government into paying whatever social costs are associated with illegal immigration — strictly a federal matter — and enforcing existing immigration laws by turning all public social service agencies in California into investigative branches of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service.

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Legality and Illegality

Both the California Left in general and Palti in particular not only seem to have missed the point, but by opposing Preposition 187 as "anti-minority" and branding its supporters as "racists" they implicitly legitimate *illegal* immigration and thus challenge the very concept of "legality." While it is both possible and morally laudable to argue for compassion and sympathy for the often desperate plight of illegal immigrants, this does not in the least alter the illegality of their status. As in all cases of illegality, if some immigrants are in fact in the country illegally, they are breaking the law and thus subject to whatever provisions are mandated for instances of the kind. While one can argue for larger or smaller immigration quotas, changing or abolishing qualifying criteria, etc., the same cannot be said for legitimating illegal immigration without at the same time delegitimating the very concept of "legality" and, consequently, the social system of which it is an essential part. This is an immensely more serious matter than merely defending illegal immigrants in dire need of whatever assistance they can receive. It contributes to the disintegration of a legal system already deep in crisis and ultimately threatens the very foundation of modern states. As Max Weber put it, in the disenchanted age of legal positivism, when all values lose their transcendental character and degenerate into mere arbitrary preferences, *legality* increasingly becomes the basis of the system's very *legitimacy*. Without it, there would no longer be any common ground and society would disintegrate into the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes*.

Earlier in this century, when the Left was more rigorous and in some sense "revolutionary," this was well understood. In 1920, at the time of the debates concerning whether the Left should participate in bourgeois parliaments and the question of "legality" and "illegality" eventually led to a major split within the Left throughout Europe, Lukács and other leading Western Marxists (as well as the Lenin of *State and Revolution* and *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*) were well aware of the *revolutionary* implications of challenging the existing system of legality.[15] It meant displacing the existing social system with an altogether new one: the replacement of a bourgeois with a proletarian order. The conservative revolutionaries in the 1920s and 1930s were also aware of the revolutionary implications of their own challenges to the existing legality of the Weimar Republic (seen as an alien system imposed by the Versailles Treaty against the legitimate will of the German people).[16] In fact, unlike the Left,

15. See Georg Lukács, "Legality and Illegality," in *History and Class Consciousness*, tr. by Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), pp. 268ff. See also Anton Pannekoek, "Weltrevolution und Kommunistische Taktik," and Herman Gorter, "Offener Brief an den Genossen Lenin," both in Kool, ed., *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft*, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-415 and 416-495, respectively; and Serge Bricianer, *Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils* (St.Louis: Telos Press, 1978), pp. 175ff.

16. See Stefan Breuer, *Anatomie der Konservative Revolution* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991).

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whose presupposed alternative order was only an elaborate theoretical deduction — which explains the unease of all the participants in the parliamentarianism debate with the concept of illegality (even at a purely tactical level) — the Right was able to contrapose to Weimar's abstract "normativism" (bourgeois legality) a much more concrete alternative: various versions of what Carl Schmitt in the 1930s systematically elaborated as *Ordnungsdenken*.[17]

As in the case of the Left's projected future order, the Right's alternative also presupposed the reconfiguration of the legal system, but in this particular case one redefining — and therefore reinventing — existing institutions, traditions and customs within a new historical context.[18] At any rate, in retrospect, already in the 1920s and early 1930s, at least in Germany, the differences between Right and Left were not as sharp as it is usually assumed. They were both roughly in agreement concerning the *particularistic* character of Weimar's allegedly universalist legal order (as being either bourgeois or imposed from outside) and the need to replace it with one reflective of what they regarded as its legitimate foundation: the developing universal class for the Left and reconstituted traditional communities for the Right.[19] It is ironic, however, that not even

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17. See Carl Schmitt, *Über die Drei Arten des Rechtswissenschaftlichen Denkens* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsansalt, 1934). Against Max Weber's classical liberal typology of modes of legitimation as "traditional, charismatic and democratic," which paradoxically could prefigure only an authoritarian solution to the post-WWI crisis in Germany — something similar to what Schmitt seemed to have in mind when he wrote *Die Diktatur* roughly at the same time — and which was the political path Weber preferred shortly before he died, Schmitt's alternative typology of "decisionism, normativism and *Ordnungsdenken*" of a decade later did not entail such a bleak outcome. The conservative grounding of decisionism into the existing legal and social order can be seen in retrospect as a potential blueprint for the new Nazi regime to fashion itself not along authoritarian and racial lines as it in fact did, but to reactivate long-standing traditions and customs as a concrete alternative to the abstract universalisms of both Wilsonianism and Leninism. While rather different from anything that developed in Germany following WWII, after the Wilsonian model was summarily imposed on the new Federal Republic, Schmitt's concept of *Ordnung* is much closer to repressed American localist/populist traditions than the New Class order being constructed at the time by New Deal ideologues in Washington.

18. When Schmitt explicitly challenged the status of the existing *legality* by vindicating a more fundamental *legitimacy*, he was not only extending his earlier defense of democracy versus a liberalism that had become a pseudo-universalist tool in the hands of a self-serving intellectual elite intent on substituting its particularistic agenda for the collective will, but also restoring the political primacy of communal life, traditions and customs above and beyond a legalistic framework no longer organically tied to it. See Carl Schmitt, *Legalität und Legitimität* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1932).

19. See Alfons Söllner, "Left Students of the Conservative Revolution: Neumann, Kirchheimer and Marcuse," in *Telos* 61 (Fall 1984), pp. 65-70. Following Habermas, Söllner traces out these differences along a rationality/irrationality axis. This distinction makes sense only as long as one overlooks that, as Schmitt points out in *Über die Drei Arten*, *op. cit.*, and, more recently, postmodernists have convincingly shown, rationality itself is as ungrounded as the irrationality against which it claims to have an alleged universalist foundation.

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the most revolutionary Left, then or now, has ever proposed a radical alternative to the predominant bourgeois mode of domination. Thus, e.g., all their ravings against the bourgeois order and praise for the dictatorship of the proletariat notwithstanding, both Lenin and Lukács ultimately assumed legality — albeit, proletarian legality — as the legitimating foundation of the future revolutionary order. In accepting normativism as the only viable form of domination, however, they betrayed the extent to which they still belabored within the confines of bourgeois cultural hegemony.[20] By vindicating the primacy and continuing viability of institutions, traditions and customs sedimented in every crevice of mundane life over abstract legal norms which, in the age of legal positivism, are but mandates usually excogitated by a handful of lawyers for rather limited purposes, Schmitt's *Ordnungsdenken* did provide probably the only radical alternative to the predominant modernist mode of domination.

Today, when the Left and Palti defend illegal immigration, and therefore unintentionally also challenge the predominant system of legality, they certainly do not have in mind substituting any alternative "proletarian perspective" — a secular reconfiguration of its theological antecedent, Christian universality. Even less are they aware of the need for an alternative mode of legitimation for a system in which legality no longer performs that task. Thus, pending the eventual revolutionary overturning of the existing world order predicated on the sovereignty of a plurality of autonomous nations (or the deployment of a new mode of legitimacy) and the unlikely (and questionable — both from a multiculturalist Left and a traditional Right perspective) subsumption of all of humanity within one political system, illegality is still a function of what the legal systems within particular countries mandate, while citizenship remains a legitimate exclusionary concept. Illegal immigrants know this all too well and tend to avoid as much as possible the kind of visibility they would be exposed to were they to seek public social services, which explains why (contrary to questionable statistics provided by state bureaucracies with their own hidden agendas) they seldom do, preferring instead to remain hidden in anonymity. Clearly, this is not the context in which Proposition 187 has been discussed. Both supporters and opponents see it as having to do with immigration in general and Third World immigrants in particular. Even in this case, however, it is not immediately clear what a correct Left or Right position should be.

At any rate, no matter how enlightened it may suddenly become, organized labor, the Left's traditional base, cannot possibly be in favor of high quotas of legal, not to mention illegal, immigrants. Except in extraordinary geopolitical situations, immigration is always a function of labor requirements. Thus the traditional Left, historically committed to defending the interests of the local working class, cannot see immigration too favorably — at least to the extent that any artificial

20. See G. L. Ulmen, *Politischer Mehrwert: Eine Studie über Max Weber und Carl Schmitt* (Weinheim: Acta Humaniora, 1991), p. 417.

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inflation of the labor supply would mean lower wage rates, or a failure to rise as they normally would in a situation of labor shortages. It is the Right, understood as the historical defender of capitalist interests, which in periods of rapid economic growth can be expected to support practically unlimited immigration.[21] Not accidentally, today the libertarian Right is the only sector within the American political spectrum which has a coherent position favoring unrestricted immigration. Besides abstract universalism — historically a radical bourgeois, rather than a Left tenet — and pending the unlikely obliteration of all national boundaries, there is absolutely nothing in traditional Left theory to justify either unrestricted immigration or universal access to social services. While predicated on a populist concern with community autonomy and self-determination, *Telos*' support for popular referenda and cultural continuity not only has nothing to do with racism or reaction but is also fully compatible with traditional Left theory.

The Path to Postmodern Populism

Since *Telos* has not undergone any "reactionary slippage" of the kind Palti outlines, it is unnecessary to "explain" how it came about. The "populist turn" was not only an attempt to understand the Left's disintegration in terms of its own theory, but also to reconstruct such a theory in order to provide a meaningful political direction. In other words, it was not *Telos* but the official Left which has forgotten its legacy and its *telos* and, consequently, ended up in a blind alley. Thus Palti's reconstruction of *Telos*' alleged reactionary involution turns out to be the mirror image of the Left's disintegration and of attempts to salvage its original emancipatory commitment to substantive rationality, personal autonomy and community self-determination. Such a task has required not only a critical scrutiny of what, after the Bolshevik *coup d'état*, became canonized as official Left dogma (centralization, the plan, social homogenization, etc.) but also a re-examination of radical theory and its self-understanding since its triumphant march to power after the French Revolution. Such a trajectory, which came to an end in 1989 with the beginning of the disintegration of the Soviet Empire and, to a lesser extent, the growing crisis of welfare states throughout the world, has

21. This, of course, applies only to a more recent Right, especially in the US, which never had a feudal past — which explains why, as Louis Hartz and others have convincingly shown, strictly speaking there could never be real conservatism in the new world. See Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955). In Europe, by contrast, immediately after the French Revolution conservative thinkers (De Maistre, Bonald, Burke, etc.) were violently anti-capitalist, i.e., anti-bourgeois, and committed to defending the viewpoint of the feudal aristocracy, seeing market relations as destructive of organic community bonds regarded as essential for upholding what it understood as "the natural order." See Panajotis Kondylis, "Früe Kritik am modernen Staat und an der kapitalistischen Wirtschaft," in *Konservatismus: Geschichtlicher Gehalt und Untergang* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986), pp. 169-181.

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resulted in the gradual but unmistakable transformation of the official Left into an integral part of the New Class.

Desperate to locate anything resembling a revolutionary subject to carry out the projected historical task — beyond a few pockets of intellectual elites — the Left has tended to latch onto whatever segment of society seemed at odds with the system, no matter how contradictory their political objectives might have been. At various times during the past three decades it has embraced women demanding *universal* equality, feminists vindicating gender *particularity*, civil rights demonstrators seeking to abolish *segregation*, black nationalists advocating *separatism*, upwardly mobile Afro-American professionals defending affirmative action, homosexuals fighting, first, *ostracism*, and seeking *protected minority status* later, illegal immigrants, farm workers, the homeless — any group complaining about something. Far from resulting in any "rainbow coalition" able to challenge the logic of the system, such an opportunistic, indiscriminate approach may have resulted in a few tenured positions for Left ideologues scavenging "cultural studies" for real or imagined subversive elements, but it has destroyed whatever there may have been of a coherent Left perspective. Thus it is no accident that the Left's main goal today is merely "inclusion" in a system no longer deemed in need of radical changes, rather than ushering in a qualitatively different society untainted by the *structural* flaws responsible, among other things, for the new *fons et origo malorum*: "exclusionary mechanisms" keeping particular individuals and groups out of the mainstream.

Palti's explanation of the genesis of *Telos*' populism only touches on the Left's increasingly contradictory predicament, thus missing the most important steps in the process and resulting in a historical reconstruction which is not altogether accurate. A number of crucial clarifications are in order to indicate the extent to which, far from abandoning whatever the original emancipatory project may have been, during the past three decades *Telos* has attempted to develop a coherent Left perspective by breaking with modernity, vindicating the dialectical heritage and historicizing its own self-understanding. In the process, however, primarily because of the Left's growing incoherence and political opportunism, *Telos* has ended up very far from official Left positions, to the point of rejecting the traditional political model of Left vs. Right in favor a new paradigm predicated on liberalism vs. democracy; New Class vs. citizens; nation-states vs. federations; and organic communities vs. fragmented societies.

1. The Alleged Abandonment of Freudo-Marxism

First and foremost, Palti seems unaware of *Telos*' original goal: a *subjectivist*, phenomenological, critique and regrounding of Marxism (understood as the latest configuration of traditional Western thought) as a philosophy of emancipation free of objectivistic encrustations. Thus, from the very beginning, the Left/Right split was never interpreted along economistic or class lines, but primarily

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in terms of those interested in rethinking and reconfiguring the tradition within new historical conditions (the Left) and those entrenched in formulations no longer able to capture changing living realities — formulations always necessarily tentative and, consequently, always susceptible to creeping obsolescence.[22] It was this unorthodox beginning, rather than the abandonment of "the Freudo-Marxist orientation of the Frankfurt School," which in many respects prefigured the eventual populist outcome. *Telos* never bought into either psychoanalysis or psychoanalytic reinterpretations of Marxism. Although a number of articles and discussions were published in its pages concerning the Frankfurt School's reception of Freud, such a move was generally seen as an idiosyncratic mistake having to do with the particular historical predicament confronted by Marxist intellectuals in the early 1930s, when this theoretical turn first attracted widespread attention. To be sure, the psychoanalytic turn was not just an attempt to explain the new configuration of "the crisis of Marxism," but also to provide it with a foundation it seemed to lack.[23] But to the extent it tended to reduce history to the mechanical re-enactment of unchangeable, biologically-grounded processes, thus excluding the possibility of the *qualitatively* new, Freudo-Marxism and its predecessor, Marcuse's "Heideggerian Marxism," was readily criticized and rejected in favor of a phenomenological alternative much closer to Marx' original concept of praxis.[24] Unlike earlier foundations such as the economy, historicity, instincts, etc., the concept of "praxis" — extremely popular in the 1960s but now completely forgotten by the post-Marxist Left — revolved around the dialectic of

22. The journal's very title was borrowed directly from Edmund Husserl's *The Crisis of European Sciences*, tr. by David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), and the project of rediscovering the seemingly forgotten emancipatory *telos* of Western civilization. It was never a matter of vindicating any transcendental metaphysics, as later deconstructionists assume but, as Husserl himself put it, of relegitimating a particular project of structuring life rationally according to *theoria* — as originally formulated by "a few Greek eccentrics" (*ibid.*, p. 289) and later generalized as European civilization.

23. Even before the turn to psychoanalysis, future Frankfurt School members such as Marcuse had already sought to provide Marxism with a Heideggerian foundation, both in order to historicize and reconfigure it. See Herbert Marcuse, "Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism (1928)," in *Telos* 4 (Fall 1969), pp. 3-34. Such developments came in the wake of the failure of earlier attempts by people such as Korsch, Lukács and Gramsci to vindicate the Hegelian foundations of Marxism. By the late 1920s all these projects were bankrupt, not only because of intrinsic theoretical flaws but also because of the increasing identification of Marxism with the ideology of the Third International. More concretely, in Gramsci's analysis of "Americanism and Fordism," if capitalism could successfully evolve from a labor-intensive to a capital-intensive stage characterized by the culture industry and the managerial mediatization of social consciousness, as it was doing precisely at that time, Marxism had no future. At any rate, Freudo-Marxism was yet another attempt to reground Marxism and explain recent problems in terms of historically contingent involutions. See Söllner, *op. cit.*, pp. 67ff.

24. See Paul Piccone and Alexander Delfini, "Herbert Marcuse's Heideggerian Marxism," in *Telos* 6 (Fall 1970), pp. 37-46; and Paul Piccone "Phenomenological Marxism," in *Telos* 9 (Fall 1971), pp. 3-31.

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freedom and self-development, relegating all else to historically contingent metaphysical objectifications. This formulation was only a step removed from what both Hegel and Goethe had long since realized, i.e., that such a process could unfold only within organic communities.

Thus, in addition to the x-rated fairy-tale character of psychoanalysis and its implicit dismissal of human freedom as an epiphenomenal accident, Freudo-Marxism was rejected because of its inherent *conservatism* and determinism. Notwithstanding Marcuse's valiant efforts to vindicate the revolutionary character of such an ultimately biologistic basis for socialism (first prefigured in *Eros and Civilization* in the mid-1950s and then fully developed in *Essay on Liberation* and *Counter-revolution and Revolt* in the late1960s), it did not escape the objectivist trap: emancipation and self-realization were still a matter of genetic make-up rather than free choice and self-determination. While *One-Dimensional Man* did not necessarily presuppose a Freudian framework and *Telos* was in full agreement with Marcuse's brilliant critique of mid-century American society, the book's pessimistic implications were never accepted, i.e., the possibility that modern capitalist society could indefinitely integrate all opposition in a smoothly functioning "system of untruth." Even at that time, such an hypothesis seemed to be blatantly falsified by the very existence of journals such as *Telos* and of the radical student movement of which it was an integral part. Contrary to all objectivistic analyses, it was obvious that no social system could survive long without a legitimate subjectivist foundation providing it creativity and dynamism.

2. Artificial Negativity

Two peculiarities in the 1960s led to a modification of Marcuse's account of the dynamics of advanced industrial societies. The result was the "artificial negativity" critique of *One-dimensional Man*, which subsequently paved the way for the recovery of "organic negativity." Frustrated with orthodox Marxists' claims about the revolutionary potential of the industrial proletariat, Marcuse had proposed outsiders or other marginal elements as the only real opposition within the system — a group he could romanticize only to the extent that he knew them from a distance and across a huge generational and cultural divide. *Telos* could not possibly buy into such a political chimera. Having come into being largely within those social margins Marcuse had unwittingly mythologized (many of its editors were recent immigrants and first or second generation New York Jews), the journal was too well aware of the pathologies of marginality to confuse them with revolution. Notwithstanding the collective euphoria of the time, it was difficult to overlook the fact that the new opposition was not only made possible but even financed by the very system the student movement sought to overthrow or at least drastically change. In return, not only did the existence of the various social movements sprouting out practically everywhere in the 1960s ultimately relegitimated the system as an open, democratic and tolerant one, but it also

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seemed to provide it with those essential internal control mechanisms (in the form of criticism of its standard practices) any system needs to remain stable and self-regulating, but which had been unintendedly eroded both by the anti-communist political repression during the 1950s and the culture industry's one-dimensionality Marcuse had described.

Palti traces out this development, but fails to realize the extent to which *Telos*' subsequent focus on Adorno's "dialectic of enlightenment" was no break with Marcuse's one-dimensionality thesis but rather a logical extension and a theoretical refinement. Not only had Adorno's (and Horkheimer's — although it was never altogether clear what the latter's exact role had been in the development of these ideas) *Dialectic of Enlightenment* preceded Marcuse's work by almost two decades, but unlike the latter's proposed possible solution to the paradox of an all-absorbing and seemingly self-sufficient capitalist system, the former remained open-end and actually incomplete, in the face of the authors' inability to see a way out of the dark tunnel of the mid-1940s. *Telos*' eventual "populist turn" is essentially an alternative *phenomenological* solution to this theoretical quandary.

While toward the end of his life Adorno's emphasis on "mimesis" in *Aesthetic Theory* began to broach paradigmatically Husserlian themes such as the primacy of the preconceptual (the *Lebenswelt* — not to be confused with Habermas' conformist and linguistified version[25]), it is clear why those original members of the Frankfurt School intimately familiar with phenomenology — especially Adorno, who had written theses both in Oxford and earlier in Germany on Husserl, or Marcuse, who had been Heidegger's assistant and had even reviewed for the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* those parts of Husserl's *Crisis of European Sciences* which were originally published in 1936 — could not deal either with phenomenology or with premodern traditions other than in an idiosyncatic contradictory way.[26] Both traditions in general and phenomenology in particular (through Heidegger) had been successfully instrumentalized by the Nazis as part and parcel of their official ideological legitimation. At that time it was not altogether off the mark to interpret phenomenology (as developed in Husserl's *Ideas* — the focus of Adorno's analysis in *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie*) as variations of the same positivism practically all members of the Frankfurt School had identified as the epitome of reification and cultural involution, or to dismiss as new forms of barbarism proposals to revive fading national

25. For a critique of Habermas' conformist appropriation and de-radicalization of the phenomenological concept of the *Lebenswelt*, see Moishe Gonzales, "Exorcising *Perestroika*," in *Telos* 81 (Fall 1989), p. 141n.

26. It was not that Adorno did not appreciate the importance of traditions. He simply could not deal with them. Thus, in "On Tradition," (1966) in *Telos* 94 (Winter 1992-93), p. 82, he writes that "tradition today poses an insoluble contradiction. There is no tradition today and none can be conjured, yet when every tradition has been extinguished the march toward barbarism begins." To the extent Adorno never resolved this contradiction he was unable to develop any kind of viable political theory.

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traditions — especially as expressions of particular racial characteristics.

It should not be difficult to understand why, for a generation of Jews who managed to survive the Holocaust only thanks to having been able to leave Germany early enough, the possibility of phenomenology and traditions providing the basis for an alternative to modernity must have seemed even less viable than "poetry after Auschwitz." Is is beside the point that there is no *necessary* connection between premodernity (or phenomenology) and Nazism (in fact, practically all phenomenologists, especially since most of them were Jewish, and most of the conservative revolutionaries interested in reactivating traditions as ideological weapons against modernity, never joined the Nazis). What is crucial is that because of, among other things, generational and cultural differences, *Telos* was able to consider possibilities the first generation of critical theorists could not (nor, for that matter could the second generation in Germany, obsessed as they were with distancing themselves from the Nazi legacy by any means whatsoever — to the point of buying into all the shibboleths of English analytic philosophy and American social science). The vindication of the primacy of the precategorical, the reformulation of a dialectic of modernity as predicated entirely on the categorical and parasitic on a culturally concealed yet fragile traditional framework it systematically erodes, and the analysis of the growing disintegration of the social fiber as the unintended consequence of the statization of previously informal relations made it possible to re-examine recent American history away from the economistic historiography which had become canonized during the 1960s.

Thus, the elaboration of artificial negativity was a preliminary reformulation of Frankfurt School historiography posing a number of question for the Left, which, however, were never considered and systematically elaborated outside of *Telos*. Instead, the Left quietly capitulated to liberal cultural hegemony, accepted the Enlightenment assumption of the system's structural soundness and infinite perfectibility, and dropped altogether any critical analysis of the logic of capitalism and the state as two agencies of social domination — while all along holding on to anti-capitalist rhetoric as an excuse to support the state as the only possible opposition to an otherwise triumphant capitalism. This allowed Leftists to join the New Class and comfortably pursue professional careers within the burgeoning academic or bureaucratic apparatus, while redefining social justice entirely in terms of integrating allegedly excluded groups. In this sense, the Left became precisely what Marcuse had feared: the source of the system's most sophisticated ideological apology. If all problems now reduced to misogyny, racism and homophobia or, at best, to "globalism," then it was no longer a matter of changing society but of either changing people's attitudes through cultural therapy or containing capitalism's most destructive features through state regulations.

Telos refused to join in this self-serving ideological capitulation. Instead of dropping the critique of liberalism and, in the face of an alleged Archie-Bunkerification of the population, retreating to a defense of representative democracy in

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general and post-Vietnam America in particular as the best of all possible systems (given existing political conditions), it sharpened its critique of liberalism in order, among other things, to explain this ideological capitulation. The deployment of "artificial negativity" to explain the fate of the Left and other modes of opposition within advanced industrial societies, as well as the new set of contradictions these developments generated, was the beginning of such a project, which soon developed into an effort to rethink the history of the past couple of centuries along lines rather different than the standard Enlightenment perspective of an inevitable and irreversible progress. Along with the identification of liberalism and modernity as the culprits, the elaboration of these themes paved the way for the formulation of a "postmodern populism" rooted in a paradigmatically American political trajectory the Frankfurt School itself never quite understood — especially Adorno, who tended to systematically confuse the real US with what Hollywood happened to depict as "America" in the 1940s and 1950s.[27]

3. Why Carl Schmitt?

Palti claims that *Telos* began to focus on Carl Schmitt's ideas because they contained a penetrating critique of liberalism and assumed the pre-existence of organic communities. This is only partly correct. Already in the late 1960s it had become painfully obvious that Marxism, notwithstanding its political pretenses, in privileging economics as the exclusive *explanandum* of all social dynamics — even if only in the infamous "last instance" — actually contained no political theory and could deal with politics only as a secondary epiphenomenal dimension.[28] At the time, however, heated discussions concerning developing viable alternatives by emphasizing "the primacy of the political" went nowhere. This was due not only to the fact that the end of the Vietnam War had also meant the fading of the student movement and the return of normality on campus, but to the more paradoxical development that by then most serious 1960s Marxists had become entrenched in academic disciplines within which "politics" was merely another concept among others. Thus the sudden rediscovery of the virtues of liberalism — even within the *Telos* editorial board — was no accident. Almost by default, liberalism turned out to be the only game in town. *Telos* did not go along with most of

27. Paul Piccone, "The Actuality of Traditions," in *Telos* 94 (Winter 1992-93), pp. 97ff.; and "From Tragedy to Farce: The Return of Critical Theory," in *New German Critique* 7 (Winter 1976), pp. 91-104.

28. When, in the early 1970s, some of the more sophisticated Marxists finally acknowledged that there was no political theory in Marxism, they left Marxism. See Lucio Colletti, "A Political and Philosophical Interview," in *New Left Review* 88 (July-August 1974). See also Norberto Bobbio, "Is There a Marxist Theory of the State?" in *Telos* 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 5-16. Long before the final collapse of official Marxism-Leninism with the disintegration of the Soviet Empire, these developments anticipated the end of the Cold War at the ideological level. It became clear at that time that, discredited as a "science" by its former advocates and exposed as politically vacuous by its traditional critics, Marxism had no future other than as another esoteric academic specialization.

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the Left. Rather, it initially continued searching for a viable alternative among the various long-forgotten (and usually repressed) unorthodox Marxist traditions. This path proved to be a dead-end. It only resulted in the realization that, although it had been assassinated by Stalinists and anti-communists during the Cold War, as in some Agatha Christie mystery stories, the victim turned out to have been dead long before the consummation of the crime: Marxism had actually been defunct at least since the Bernstein Debate at the turn of the century, when capitalism's ability to accommodate social-democracy and integrate the working class had relegated "revolution" either to a violent transition to capitalism or to a questionable effort to generate a mythological "new Man."[29]

As a result, after the mid-1970s, the journal's focus gradually shifted to providing systematic analyses of the Soviet Union and East European regimes in order to inquire into the possibility of these regimes being able, somehow, to develop into anything closer to Marx' original ideals. The reason for this was not simply that the Soviet Union pretended to be Marxist — at least to the extent that it had abolished private ownership of the means of production. Rather, as a bureaucratic-centralist system where the logic of the enlightenment had been developed further than anywhere else, it prefigured the fate of all other societies, whether authoritarian, "totalitarian" or otherwise, which belonged to that particular tradition. Notwithstanding crucial differences, the question concerning the emancipatory possibilities of the USSR[30] was also relevant for Western societies well into the process of developing sophisticated welfare state variations of the same

29. Special issues of *Telos* on Lukács, Gramsci, the council communists, etc. only confirmed the suspicion that subsequent effort to re-Hegelianize or Freudianize Marxism had failed to generate anything more than new versions of the same old objectivistic metaphysics. All of these accounts suffered from the same defects of liberalism. As for its claim to be able to remedy capitalism's paradigmatic disease, "alienation," all Marxism could come up with were mere metaphysical reconciliations of subject and object through identification with the totality, the state or the party. See "Special Issue on Lukács I" and "Special Issue on Lukács II," in *Telos* 10 and 11 respectively (Winter 1971) and (Spring 1972); and the numerous articles on various unorthodox Marxists.

30. By the early 1980s, it was rather obvious that, with Brezhnev, the USSR had entered a stage of terminal stagnation. Unless substantial reforms were undertaken, the Soviet regime would run into increasingly unmanageable crises. At that time, the debate within the Left was whether reforms were at all possible, with most people arguing either for their impossibility, and therefore the likelihood of re-Stalinization (e.g., Brus), or fantasizing about the old dream of working class explosions ushering in real socialism (e.g., Castoriadis). The view that minimal reforms were possible, but that, because of the state of internal social disintegration they would not bring about any substantial improvement, was not very popular, either with the residual "revolutionary" Left still waiting for the "big bang," after which all would be well in this, the best of all possible classless worlds, or the conformist liberal-Left, for which the abolition of internal repression alone would be sufficient to usher in Nirvana — or even with the libertarian Right, who thought all along that the reintroduction of market relations would be sufficient to solve all internal irrationalities. See Paul Piccone and Victor Zaslavsky, "The Socio-Economic Roots of Re-Armament," in *Telos* 50 (Winter 1981-82), pp. 5-18.

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bureaucratic-centralist model. The answers always ended up negative and the Soviet Union itself was increasingly seen, at best, as mired in a terminal stagnation. Unlike the West, however, where reforms were obviously possible without necessarily involving major disruptions, in the USSR, while not altogether impossible (as a significant sector of the Left still argued), they would have entailed very high political costs — as they did when Gorbachev eventually was forced to introduce them. As with practically all other political positions, because of its rejection of economism and its focus on social and political realities, here also *Telos* was becoming increasingly isolated both from the Left and the mainstream, while unwittingly coming closer to traditional American conservatives who for years had also criticized the New Deal as a milder and more benevolent version of the same socialist system deployed in the Soviet Union.

It was at that time that the work of Carl Schmitt became relevant. *Telos*' interest in his work, however, was not simply due to the fact that it did provide a penetrating critique of liberalism and presupposed "the idea of the pre-existence of some 'community'," as Palti claims. Rather, Schmitt's theories seemed to be able to make a lot more sense out of political realities than anything else available. What were Left theoreticians concluding at the time, by applying their allegedly "superior" knowledge of social dynamics? On the eve of the economic boom brought about by the massive deficit spending resulting from Reagan's deployment of military Keynesianism, leading Marxists were still publishing ponderous tomes about the obsolescence of historical materialism (something which had been convincingly demonstrated by Benedetto Croce over a century earlier and had precipitated the Bernstein Debate), the falling rate of profits, and the forever "coming crisis of capitalism" — often marketed with sleek covers depicting, e.g., a car with a flat tire as a metaphor for a permanently stalled American economy.[31] In the midst of economic rationalization (but increasing social and cultural disintegration), Habermas[32] was blissfully explaining how, notwithstanding the system's "legitimation crisis," things were always improving

31. See Stanley Aronowitz, *The Crisis of Historical Materialism. Class, Politics and Culture in Marxist Theory* (New York: Praeger, 1981); and Stanley Aronowitz, *Food, Shelter and the American Dream* (New York: Seabury, 1974). Since that time, things have deteriorated much further. Today, those few rare Marxists who have resisted liberal involution are not even attempting to reinvent old critiques. They find themselves so thoroughly confused that they no longer even have a clue as to what "capitalism" is and end up demonizing it simply as the source of all evils: whatever happens to be bothersome at any given time. Thus some of them propose to "replace the image of capitalism as a system to be overthrown with the image of a world shot through with a variety of practices and processes which are destructive to our lives." See Cynthia Kaufman, "Thoughts on Anticapitalism: Imagining a Way beyond Revolution or Reform," in *Socialist Review*, Vol. 25, Nos. 3-4 (1995), p. 79.

32. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, tr. by Thomas McCarthy, Vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1884); Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

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because of the logic of irreversible rationalization, Castoriadis[33] was raving about a mythical Soviet "stratocracy" and the inevitability of war with the US because of the impossibility to reform, and most sovietologists and East European experts could not conceive of an end to the Cold War stalemate, much less the collapse of the Soviet Union.[34]

The analysis of these developments in terms of the logic of artificial negativity — a rather pedestrian and common-sensical account of the logic of all social systems, which did not, however, privilege economics as the decisive dimension of social reality — prevented *Telos* from ending up with what in retrospect appear as rather silly political positions. Thus, the "artificial negativity" critique of Castoriadis' cataclismic view of the future of the Soviet Union in the early 1980s was simply that, confronted with the impossibility of continuing existing policies, rather than precipitating WWIII, as Castoriadis prophesied — a war it could not possibly sustain, much less win — the Soviet Union would usher in minimal, even if politically dangerous, reforms.[35] This belated recognition of the necessity of freedom as the regulatory lubricant of any viable advanced industrial society meant the *de facto* creation of artificial negativity by the bureaucratic apparatus and the possibility of the development of a significant internal opposition. As in all cases of administrative attempts to instrumentalize creativity, first it is essential to allow it to develop freely, i.e., to be organic, or else it is neither creative nor spontaneous, and thus useless for the needed rationalizing task. This modicum of creativity presupposes freedom and choice, and, therefore, the possibility of the reappearance of dysfunctional social forms which may threaten the predominant system, especially if this system is not an organic outgrowth of the society itself. Thus, it entails at least a temporary loss of control, which the power structure can only attempt to reimpose *post factum* at great political costs. This is precisely what eventually happened in the Soviet Union: Gorbachev's tentative reforms opened up sufficient space to threaten the system's legitimacy and, when the authors of the failed *coup* realized the extent of the reformist threat and attempted to restore by force the *status quo ante*, the whole thing disintegrated.[36]

This sort of analyses, increasingly emphasizing the decisive character of the

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33. See his *Devant la Guerre* (Paris: Fayard, 1981).

34. Thus, before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the eventual collapse of the Soviet Empire, with the exception of the "Introduction," where it was argued that "throughout this process of slow decline towards *de facto* Third World status [Perestroika], not only will the predicament of the bureaucratic apparatus become increasingly tenuous, but the Soviet Empire will have to be dismantled," practically all the contributors to the special issue on "Perestroika in Eastern Europe," *Telos* 79 (Spring 1989) assumed the indefinite continuation of Communist Party rule in the area.

35. See Paul Piccone, "On Social Movements, Non-Liberals and Castoriadis," in *Telos* 53 (Fall 1982), pp. 206-208.

36. For a critique of liberal analyses of the USSR and Eastern Europe, see Gonzales, "Exorcising Perestroika," *op. cit.*, pp. 130-154.

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cultural rather than the *economic* infrastructure, meant a distancing from the Left, especially in view of its recent involution. It also cried out for a coherent political theory — which is precisely what Schmitt's work provided,[37] along with a profound alternative approach to the history of the past two centuries, not just as the triumphant march of capitalism, but also as the unfolding of a new mode of political domination and the intensification of the contradictions of modernity. In addition to his monumental work on legal theory, such as his *Verfassungslehre*, his account of the obsolescence of the state form developed within the *ius publicum Earopaeum* and his later discussions of *Großräume* as new versions of federal systems with an hegemonic center both reconstruct the history of geopolitical modes of organization and prefigure possible new world orders. Most important of all, his analysis of Weimar's normativism lays out the foundations for a systematic critique of the New Class in terms of the pseudo-universality of both Leninism and Wilsonianism, and the growing contradiction between liberalism and democracy. These ideas turned out to be immensely more useful to analyze current political realities than anything being developed by the Left.

In this context, the privileging of democracy over liberalism need not necessarily be seen exclusively as a radical break with the liberal tradition, but could also be interpreted as a *particular* resolution of one of its fundamental contradictions. Instead of following the New Class hypostatization of arbitrary human "rights" as the defining cultural attributes of an otherwise abstract humanity by a state thereby legitimated as the ultimate political authority — the failed strategy deployed most recently by defeatist East European dissidents in the 1970s to vindicate the primacy of "civil society" against an allegedly invincible and all-powerful state — the populist alternative can be interpreted as hypostatizing democracy as the highest value within the liberal axiological arsenal. This privileging of democracy has nothing to do with the kind of *plebiscitary* democracy allegedly possible only within non-existing racially and ethnically homogeneous communities, as hostile New Class critics of *participatory* democracy often

37. Although Schmitt was totally unknown in the US and his ideas were first introduced in the 1960s through the work of George Schwab (against the bitter opposition of leading Marxist legal theorists such as Otto Kirchheimer and Franz Neumann, who summarily rejected Schwab's thesis on Schmitt in Columbia University because, before the term was even invented, it was deemed "politically correct"), through a purely historical accident *Telos* had already been exposed to some of these ideas when the journal was initially founded. One of the early mentors, Mitchell Franklin, had been part of the American legal team in Neuremburg, where he had come in contact with Schmitt and his ideas — especially Schmitt's work on Roman Law. Franklin had a great deal of respect for Schmitt's works, but to the extent he was a Marxist committed to Enlightenment rationalism, he regarded them as dangerous and evil — to be fought by all means available. Thus, most of the original *Telos* editors have the dubious distinction of having been exposed to critiques of Schmitt long before they became acquainted with his ideas. See Robert D'Amico, "Essays in Memory of Mitchell Franklin," and Alex Delfini and Paul Piccone, "Our Mitchell Franklin," both in *Telos* 70 (Winter 1986-1987), pp. 6-10 and 53-57.

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claim. Rather, unlike a dogmatic liberalism totalized by allegedly universally binding norms which unwittingly recycle the totalitarian absolutism of modernity, the populist vindication of participatory democracy is predicated on the American colonial *ethos* of uprooted radical Protestant communities reconfiguring the universalism and absolutism of the Western tradition within a cultural particularism totalized by federal or confederal contracts. In this sense, the debate is no longer simply one between liberalism and anti-liberalism, but between modernist and anti-modernist reformulations of the same liberal tradition.

4. Organic Communities — Real and Imagined

Palti claims that Schmitt postulates "the pre-existence of some 'community' (the "we the people" that every constitution invokes)," as the legitimation for political formations. The point, presumably, is to show the vacuity of a political theory predicated on mythological foundations: if no such communities exist then it is impossible for them to legitimate anything. Therefore, there are no real alternatives to the New Class liberal counterclaim that communities are the *result* rather than the *presupposition* of constitutions. But at a time characterized by the growing disintegration of pseudo-nations and, in the worst cases, the explosion of brutal civil wars — something Schmitt predicted as very likely to happen as a result of the end of the Cold War[38] — it is difficult to take seriously the claim that nations or other political entities can be constructed "from above," by the decision of a few nationalist intellectuals so predisposed. Even Habermas knows better, when he acknowledges that meaning cannot be created administratively. Today, all political entities which were not already "nations" in some sense before their unification, from Canada to Italy to Belgium and Spain, are in deep trouble and likely to survive the present crisis only through systematic devolution and decentralization into federations or confederations predicated on the principle of subsidiarity and maximum possible local autonomy — the only levels within which it is possible to have any real accountability, participation and democratic self-determination.

At any rate, for Schmitt the legitimacy of political entities is not predicated on the *pre-existence* of organic communities, but on the *decision* of a people already sharing a common fate (because of geographical proximity and common cultural/historical experiences) to constitute themselves as a political entity. It is unclear how a constitutional document can create a community *ex nihilo*, unless there is already some well defined entity able and willing to make such a decision. The New Class liberal account makes sense only in particular contexts where, as in the case of the US Constitution, it is a matter of aggregating a group of already constituted (or in the process of being constituted) political entities into larger federations rather than communities or nations. It does not make sense

38. See Carl Schmitt, "El Orden del Mundo Después la Segunda Guerra Mundial," in *Revista de Estudio Politicos* 122 (March-April 1962), pp. 19-36.

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when it is a matter of *creating* communities by legal or constitutional means, as has been the experience in many European countries where nations have been the result of the *decision* of an intellectual elite to organize a particular territory into an arbitrary political entity. Communities, or nations as communities, to the extent that they presuppose a shared history and sedimented precategorical experiences, cannot be created in this fashion.

As Hegel originally described in *The Philosophy of Right* — one of the earliest attempts to transcend Enlightenment social philosophy — organic communities providing meaning and identity are necessary conditions for the development of an autonomous individuality (made possible only through the successful internalization of collective cultural forms) and, subsequently, self-determining "civil societies" of free citizens. These are the sources of the precategorical *doxa* Husserl saw as the foundation of particular cultures and of individual identity — something the state or other formal institutions cannot provide. Unless these communal frameworks are already given, social life is impossible other than as it obtains in *Brave New World*: a gulag of guards (or administrators) and amoral subindividuals (or clients) operating in a context of contradictory rules and regulations, whose sheer number and complexity make compliance increasingly difficult. This is the predicament Schmitt described in terms of the crisis of legal positivism and saw as the result of "motorized legislation."[39] Modern society has been able to ignore this essential communal dimension of social life only because of the vast cultural patrimony it inherited in the form of sedimented traditions and customs, and which it still takes for granted — even though it systematically erodes them and their disappearance is the source of the increasing disintegration of the social fiber. This is why social engineering seeking to substitute communal frameworks with formal institutional mechanisms usually fail, and, e.g., suburban life as an aggregation of anonymous commuters is the modern functional equivalent of hell.

Thus, one need not necessarily comb the American rural mid-west in order to rediscover those types of communities still commanding a privileged place within whatever there is of traditional American folklore. Rather, they can be found in any urban setting in the form of immigrant communities, church groups and other informal networks held together not by mere *contractual obligations* subject to renegotiation whenever any of the parties so decides, but by *irrevocable pacts* rooted in realities transcending individual wills and involving transgenerational axiological transmissions. Palti misses the point when he confuses Christopher Lasch's historically specific vision of populism as an exclusively 19th century American phenomenon with *Telos*' postmodern version, tied to no particular geographical locality and actually constituting the necessary preconditions for all meaningful social existence. Similarly, these communities are both real and ideal (or "imagined" — to use Benedict Anderson's disparaging designation meant to

39. See Carl Schmitt, "The Plight of European Jurisprudence" (1943-44), in *Telos* 83 (Spring 1990), pp. 50ff.

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discredit them as mere tools of ideological manipulation). As the sources of *doxa* and, therefore, of any meaningful *social* existence, even if only as memories or habits, these merely imagined communities remain as horizons even in the most alienated individuals for whom everything seems immediately to reduce to the cash-nexus or the purely categorical dimension. Modern and postmodern consciousness is inextricably trapped in a temporality in which premodern organicity as an idealized past sedimented in personal identity always mediates between the present and the future — a future no divinity or secular theory of history can guarantee as better or worse than the real past.

This is why Palti is wrong in claiming that, if these organic communities do not have any extra-discursive referent, they degenerate to the same level of run-of-the-mill New Class ideologies. The two obtain in qualitatively different noetic dimensions. One is a mere conceptual construction, while the other refers to a precategorical dimension logically prior to the deployment of concepts in terms of which experience is structured. The first is *contingent,* while the second is *necessary* for there to be social experience at all. In this sense, imagined communities are as effective as real ones which, as a result of the destructive impact of modernity, have become eroded and fragmented. Precisely because of their imaginary character, these organic communities fulfill a critical function as potential alternatives to today's merely contractual political arrangements[40] whose liberal legitimacy, on closer scrutiny, turns out to be as decisionistic — and therefore as "irrational" — as that of other systems not concretely rooted in concrete social life. As a jurist, Schmitt approached these problems in terms of institutional arrangements rather than ideologies. His analysis of normativism and *Ordnungsdenken*, however, deals precisely with this problem. Contrary to facile liberal criticisms, usually focusing on his Nazi or pre-Nazi period and, therefore, concerned exclusively with the kind of decisionism he developed early on in *Die Diktatur*,[41] Schmitt's thought evolved from an analysis of decisionism and normativism as equally legitimate political forms into the privileging of *Ordnung* as the sedimentation of the organic community in institutions, traditions and customs. As such, even in cases where organic communities have been eroded or fragmented beyond recognition, their idealized (or imagined) counterpart does not reduce to

40. The vindication of the primacy of the *pact* over the *contract* as the ultimate foundation of political institutions is not to suggest a displacement of the second by the first. Since only political institutions sufficiently small to allow face-to-face interaction — and, therefore, real democracy — can be predicated on the pact, all larger units will necessarily have to be contractual. This is why federations and confederations are contractual institutions (which explains why Schmitt regarded them as inherently unstable) aggregating communities based on the pact. Thus the main problem with liberal political theory is not that it is outright wrong, but one-sided in its exclusion of the pact as an ineradicable dimension of social being.

41. See, e.g., Söllner, *op. cit.*, p. 57, where Schmitt's political philosophy is identified *sic et nunc* with decisionism and irrationalism.

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the level of abstract New Class ideologies but remain concrete horizons buried within individual consciousness and inherited institutional arrangements.[42]

Whether American farmers are a "disruptive political power" or whether, as Palti is probably correct in arguing, they are as integrated as anyone else because they receive substantial government subsidies (most of which, however, go to multinational agrobusinesses rather than small farmers) is irrelevant to the essential role of these organic communities as axiological horizons constituting individual identity and facilitating social interaction. The concrete existence of organic communities in remote corners of the mid-west or in mountainous Swiss cantons only means that in these places it is probably be much easier to lead a satisfying life within a viable political organization free of the pathologies of modernity: homelessness, criminality, irresponsibility, decadence and ultimately self-destruction. Within such contexts the "system" is no longer an external obstacle, as in "civil society" ideologists' hypostatization of a permanent adversarial relation between system and lifeworld, but an extension of people's very being, in a way reminiscent of Hegel's concept of the ethical state — something impossible on a national level where all relations have to be formalized, but viable on a smaller scale allowing for personal interaction and thus communication not limited exclusively to conceptual interchanges.

Politics after the Cold War

Given this modified reconstruction of the genesis of *Telos*' positions, Palti's other accounts of the antinomies of postmodern populism dissipate, at best, into misunderstandings. Thus, when he argues that the vindication of organic communities throws into doubt the analysis of the decomposition of the system, he overlooks the extent to which that analysis has undergone refinements. It is no longer a matter of establishing the existence of variations of the mythological crisis of capitalism as a result of the falling rate of profit or of the system's permanent stability, as was postulated by the structural functionalist sociology of the 1950s. Rather, the objective is to reconstruct the history of the last couple of century in terms of the dynamics of a modernity understood in terms of identity logic and a generalized account of the Husserlian crisis of the European Sciences. Although instrumentalized by deconstructionists to undermine the foundation of the very cultural

42. In addition to the often-discussed opportunism and careerism, this is the theoretical basis of Schmitt's original adherence to Nazism: if both Weimar's "normativism" and the Nazi's "decisionism" were equally arbitrary and their legitimacy was predicated on the particular decision of one or a handful of people, then there is really no criterion in terms of which it is possible to choose one over the other. See Schmitt, *Über die Drei Arten . . ., op. cit.* But in this same work, before he embarks on a defense of the legitimacy of the Nazi regime, Schmitt develops the notion of *Ordnungsdenken*, which transcends the arbitrary character of both decisionism and normativism by rooting legitimacy on concrete institutions as the embodiment of traditions and customs — organic communities in their real, imagined and sedimented form.

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project which allowed its formulation, thus degrading the whole effort into a nihilistic exercise in academic opportunism, this reconstruction helps to explain the extent to which the dynamics of the system are conditioned by the conflict between the residues of traditional organicity still sedimented in everyday life and the rationalizing mundanity of modernity — what over a century ago was identified by Marx as capital and by Heidegger as technology.

Whether the system decomposes or is reconstituted is a contingent matter dependent on political choices. Whether communities able to generate the kind of autonomous individuality necessary to sustain democratic institutions will be reconstituted, or whether social irresponsibility has become so widespread that the tendency to delegate decisions and responsibility for their execution to an administrative-bureaucratic apparatus will continue in the foreseeable future remains to be seen. Postmodern populism can only provide the insight that, unless regulated by autonomous communal organizations predicated on *pacts* rather than mere *contracts*, bureaucratic rationalization will continue to destroy the preconditions for its own reproducibility, thus intensifying rather than solving the problems entrusted to it.

Palti's worries about the moral qualifications of organic communities, i.e., that "people are not ready for democracy" and that, left to themselves, unshackled by the benevolent dictatorship of a New Class elite with exclusive access to the kind of knowledge and wisdom necessary to determine what is "reactionary" or "progressive," they will not behave in politically correct ways, betrays the extent to which the Jacobin-Blanquist-Bolshevik legacy remains an inextricable part of Left ideology. Clearly, he has not done his multicultural homework. In an age when all normative structures are acknowledged to be a function of particular cultural projects and axiological heterogeneity has become an inextricable fact of life, it is no longer possible to uncritically pass moral judgements about allegedly unsavory practices other than from particular cultural locations totalized by pacts. Such judgements have no normative import outside those cultural loci and their execution becomes a function either of existing contractual arrangements or new contractual negotiations predicated on persuasion. In extreme cases, when persuasion is not sufficiently persuasive, matters can only be settled, as they always have and always will, through the deployment of violence by those "persuaders" strong enough to enforce their persuasion.

Given his universalist-absolutist viewpoint, Palti fails to see the abstract character of Jacoby's question concerning the *equivalence* of all traditions and whether they should all be supported. But there are no traditions in the abstract: there are *our* traditions and *others*. Our traditions are never given once and for all, with a mathematically precise structure impervious to any modifications. Rather, they come down to us as part of our being and subject to the same dynamics whereby we confront ourselves. We have to live with them, in which case it is not a question of supporting them or not, but of reconstituting them in

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particular ways. Other traditions are more of a problem. What can one do with alien cultures which sacrifice virgins, sell slaves, sanction the ownership of land, eat meat, encourage smoking, allow premarital sex or condone nudity in public? One can either tolerate the particular practices and try to persuade their practitioners of the error of their ways, or else *force* them to mend their ways: *tertium non datur*.[43] It is not a matter of "moral progress" or of the gradual elimination of "authoritarianism" — a questionable neo-Franciscan concept originally instrumentalized by the German New Left in the 1960s to indict the pseudo-democratic nature of the Federal republic, which assumes the universality of "brotherly (and maybe even sisterly) love" and the evil nature of all authority. What is at stake is not moral rectitude but political arrangements allowing the maximum amount of freedom and self-determination, independently of political correctness.

Esoteric as they may seem because of their absence from predominant political discourse, these issues threaten to reconfigure 21st century politics. The fading of the Cold War has meant the end of the two predominant universalisms, Wilsonianism and Leninism, and a redefinition of politics in terms of the primacy of culture, away from earlier questions of social, economic or technological modes of organization. Friend-enemy divides, the fundamental political determinants, are already being redefined along cultural lines[44] inconsistent with traditional 20th century politics predicated on national cultural homogeneity and the neutralization of politics as mere internal administrative squabbles.[45] Within such a framework, opposition to cultural homogenization (or "Americanization,"

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43. Sure enough, *Telos* has not condoned all traditions or all populists movements. Thus the positive evaluation of the Northern League (formerly the Lombard League) for its emphasis on federalism, accountability, decentralization and the defense of local traditions and customs has never been extended to Le Pen's movement, whose nationalist and occasionally ethnocentric or racist excesses have been criticized for prefiguring a recycling of some of the worst disasters in the 20th century. As with California's Proposition 187, the point is not to demonize illegal Arab immigrants in the name of a vacuous and abstract universalism, but to device a rational immigration policy and a modicum of tolerance for alien traditions and customs which, while strange, are not impossible to live with.

44. See Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). Responses to Huntington's original 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs* remain caught within the same general political framework and, consequently, miss what is truly novel in the post-Cold War world. See *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 4 (September-October 1993), pp. 2-26.

45. Schmitt identified efforts at depoliticization as the main thrust of modern Western history since the 16th century. Because conflict is an inextricable dimension of being and, therefore, ineliminable, once successfully neutralized in one sphere conflict reappears in a different one. Thus, in 1929, when the League of Nations was still trying to neutralize political conflicts of the kind that had led to WWI, he prefigured the coming clash with the Soviet Union. See Carl Schmitt, "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations (1929)," in *Telos* 96 (Summer 1993), pp. 130-142. See also John McCormick, "Introduction to Schmitt's 'The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations (1929)," in the same issue, pp. 119-129. The reappearance of conflict at the cultural level is but the latest instance of this dialectic.

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as Europeans call it) is rapidly becoming not only a major international issue, but a domestic one as well — an issue of which the rise of multiculturalism is but a pathological symptom. Unlike futile past efforts to eliminate conflict altogether by devising appropriate organizational structures, today the task is to manage conflict and channel it in creative directions within new political institutions.

Palti is right in seeing politics in the US as frozen within the two party system. He is wrong, however, in assuming that it could be defrosted with the creation of a "third party" as a viable alternative — one which has been failing for over a century or, if it succeeds, simply means the substitution of one of the two main party or a refocusing of issues rather than the proliferation of political options.[46] What is needed, rather, is a redefinition of politics along local lines, within a truly federal system predicated on the principle of subsidiarity. It is no longer a matter of Right or Left, but of reconstituting viable communities able to generate the kind of individuals that can sustain democratic institutions. Such a development, however, presupposes prior intellectual preparation which, in the US, has hardly begun. American populism was never thought through as a coherent program of social reform, much less as a systematic political philosophy. Its attempts to vindicate traditional American values predicated on local community autonomy and self-determination almost immediately fell victim of the predominant economism of the time, which reformulated the movement exclusively as a class phenomenon concerned no longer with concrete communities, but with allegedly helpless individuals confronting an all-powerful capitalism. Thus the progressives had no trouble at all in integrating this populism into a New Class statist ideology hypostatizing the state as the only agency able to deal with and correct the irrationalism of capitalism. The task of theoretical journals such as *Telos* is not to organize new political parties or revolutions but, at best, to interpret socio-political realities and articulate them coherently in terms of past experiences and current possibilities. Whether the Left — or the Right — is interested in these efforts, it is its business.

46. American history since the Civil War is a history of failed efforts to create third parties. All such efforts since in the 1850s, when the Republicans displaced the Whigs, have failed to articulate alternatives able to make a permanent impact on the American political landscape other than by influencing the existing parties which eventually integrated them in their ranks. Given existing US constitutional arrangements and the first-past-the-post electoral system, not only it is practically impossible for a multi-party system to develop but, if it did, it would simply throw the whole federal system in disarray. Even in Canada, where the parliamentary system is more amenable to party diversification, the successful emergence of new parties is usually tied to regionalism (as in the case of Social Credit in the 1930s and Bloc Québécois more recently), which at best only distorts national politics. Thus when new parties come on the scene, as with the recent emergence of the Reform Party, their strategy is either regionalist or explicitly aimed at displacing one of the two major parties. See Tom Flanagan, "Models of Party Competition," in *Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995), pp. 201-212.

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More on Moral Realism

Paul Gottfried

Paul Piccone's objections to Anthony Matteo's "neoscholastic" attempt to show the possibility of a "science of ethics" misses the point in several ways.[1] Contrary to Piccone's charge that Matteo is merely "recycling an Aristotelian-Thomism to vindicate a *particular* interpretation of conventional morality by turning it into an extension of natural law," Matteo is addressing an important political issue concerning what shared cultural assumptions are necessary to allow authentic communities to function and coexist. According to Matteo, such a project is possible because most of the human race, unless demented or hopelessly callous, have shared moral sentiments and engage in a common form of moral reasoning. Matteo is right, although I have reservations about his use of "science" to deal with transcultural norms. The word "scientific" is too loaded to be of any use, except to characterize the hard sciences. Nor does it seem wise at this point in time to try to appropriate the term for classical philosophical inquiry. Calling such an inquiry "scientific" will not lead the general public or the scientific community to view moral solutions as "science." Not all reasoned argument can or should be styled as such. If social engineers and social "scientists" do so, both their agenda and fraud would be immediately obvious. There is no reason for those addressing ethical questions to play the same semantic game.

Yet, Matteo has been attacked for the wrong reason. That wrong reason is to have failed to take over Piccone's relativist view of cultures, which is based on the self-contradictory assumption that all communal values are equally worthy of our respect — or contempt. Efforts to posit universal moral truths typically elicits one or more of these reactions from Piccone and his postmodern populist comrades: 1) it is impossible to speak of universal anything without becoming a tool of the liberal managerial class; and 2) we cannot move toward populist communitarianism unless we first accept a pluralism of different cultures and reject the pretense of a universal culturally- neutral "moral obviousness."

All of these assumptions are open to question, and Piccone himself would do the questioning if he were not so obsessed with a particular agenda. Condamning managerial or global democratic imperialists, however, does not require that the critics be morally neutral. Indeed, one can hold strong moral views of all kinds

1. See Paul Piccone, "Introduction" to *Telos* 106 (Winter 1996), pp. 7-8; and Anthony M. Matteo, "In Defense of Moral Realism," in the same issue, pp. 64-76.

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and still believe that the US government or federal courts should not inflict their cultural preferences on us. Although I for one have moral and other objections to homosexuality, I would not favor a crusade by the American military to rid the world of this practice. I also would not keep San Franciscans from showering gays with special rights, if that it is what they decide.

Moral universals are not disproved because people no longer believe in them and once may have argued poorly on their behalf. Everyone behaves as if universals of this kind do operate. We necessarily make moral judgments for ourselves and others, which suggests that these judgments are more than private conceits or the products of mere ethnic quirks. There is also widely shared moral outrage about the mass murder committed by particularly vicious regimes. Matteo's remarks about the probable Western reaction to child prostitution in Thailand are intended to show that moral outrage has a substantive as wells as an emotional basis. We are offended by certain acts because of what we *know* to be right or wrong. Piccone makes the same assumption when he lists acts which he personally considers wrong (on what basis, he never makes clear), e.g., "burning witches, human sacrifices, clitoridectomy, abortion [*sic*], etc." Others may consider such deeds as "morally obvious," but apparently Piccone does not. In fact, I have heard him describe the mechanism of behavioral control that would be applied in his imagined world of coexisting communities, if one of these entities began to act outrageously. The others would "gang up on it" and force it to shape up. On what grounds would they be authorized to do so? Would it be private moral judgments that Piccone has arbitrarily made his own? Or, does Piccone believe, like Matteo and me, that decent societies have closely overlapping moral standards, however much they may diverge on political forms or culinary tastes?

It also seems that Piccone has misrepresented Matteo's allusions to what is morally obvious. Matteo does not claim that what is good and just is coextensive with all cultural particularities one or another society may accept. Today burning witches is seen as gravely wrong, and one may hope that the present efforts of judges to treat gender distinctions as mere social constructs and to insist on moral equivalence between heterosexual and homosexual marriages will some day be looked upon as odious modernist superstitions. Believing that human beings can grasp what is good for their own family and communal survival and that what they grasp as such has transcultural significance is not the same as justifying every social practice or weird idea characteristic of a particular group. Human beings and societies share standards and rules, and by looking at our social practices we can determine why almost all cultural groups frown on adultery, child molesting, unjustified homicide and theft.

To be sure, these are limiting cases that engaged relativists are fond of citing: e.g., that pagan Greeks, unlike Jews and Christians, celebrated homosexual relations, that the Egyptian royal family practiced incest, that certain societies practice polygamy and that Tibetans once even practiced polyandry. But these cases must

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all be viewed in context, and it is wrong to assume more about them than the context would warrant. Homosexual relations were encouraged in the collectivist military regime set up by the ancient Spartans, as a form of male bonding; and it also flourished among upper-class Athenians, who generally despised women, and married and reproduced only as a civic obligation. But no Greek society, or any other past one ever treated homosexuality as the basis of a family relation or held marriage to be an institution appropriate for homosexual partners. Moreover, in most societies, African animist, Muslim, and Hindu as well as Judeo-Christian, a grave social stigma is attached to being homosexual. Despite the conjugal practices of ancient Egyptian royalty, the incest taboo continued to exist among their subjects, who considered incest as abominable except for gods. As for the custom in some societies of having more than one wife, this does not disprove anything about transcultural norms. In societies that feature polygamy, the institution has not been randomly chosen. It has an economic basis, is restricted to certain classes, and does not change any traditional sexual code: some of the most puritanical societies, such as Wahabi Muslim Saudi Arabia, permit polygamy but also punishes adultery and fornication. As might be expected, polyandry is far less common than polygamy, but in the one society in which it was known to be practiced, there was a perpetual dearth of young males, and women often found themselves widowed and sometimes without a single spouse. Moreover, as Steven Goldberg shows in *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*, all societies, with the exception of our own, have been male-dominated, save for child-rearing and related tasks.

This, of course, has not come about through conscious moral reasoning, but does testify to another regularity in human experience. Societies do not develop institutions haphazardly, but act in harmony with constant needs, some of them determined by our evolutionary nature. The honor due to parents in all traditional settings comes from recognition of the ties of blood as well as gratitude toward nurturers and educators. Out of their *coniunctio sanguinis*, as Cicero soundly observes in *De Officiis*, XVII, comes both the origin of civil society and the prototype of human mingling and loyalties. Though not an illustration of purely instinctual behavior, this does indicate a social sense developed through reflection and socio-evolutionary need. Attention has been given to this widely shared social sense by thinkers going from Aristotle and Cicero down to the Scottish common sense philosophers, Burke, Max Scheler, Bernard Lonergan, James Q. Wilson, and, in a book now in progress, Thomas Fleming. Matteo's attempt to address this theme does not mean he is foisting on the readers of *Telos* either medieval Thomism or post-WWII scientism. He is bringing up relevant issues and possible answers for all who are looking to restore a non-socially engineered communal life, including Paul Piccone.

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The Tribulations of Right Moral Dogmatism: Reply to Gottfried

Paul Piccone

Contrary to Left folklore, according to which an obsessed, monolithic conservative minority is depicted as bent on "turning the clock back" or at least prevent any more progressive social changes in order to safeguard existing privileges and social injustices, what is most surprising about American conservatism is its political fragility, theoretical confusion and axiological bankruptcy. Notwithstanding the fact that his own brand of communism turned out to be a paper mouse, the Great Helmsman was right: American conservatives are paper tigers. This explains why, after threatening restorations even more loudly than the Holy Alliance and thundering about radical changes, roll-backs and the demolition of every redistributive liberal program deployed since the infamous serpent gave Eve the first welfare apple in the Garden of Eden, American conservatives invariably fold as soon as they come close to power. It is no accident that Nixon's most memorable "reactionary" policies were the international legitimation of communist China, the imposition of prices and wages controls, and affirmative action, that Reagan's "new federalism" resulted in the greatest expansion of the federal bureaucracy, the welfare state and the national debt since FDR, and that Gingrich bit the dust even before he could begin to implement anything.

Paul Gottfried, a renowned paleoconservative outflanked on his Right maybe only by Attila the Hun, is a case in point. When all is said and done, on close scrutiny his staunch conservatism turns out to be a garden variety of what Hegel used to call an "abstract negation": no more than a reaffirmation of his alleged opponents' presuppositions under the pretense of providing a radical alternative.

Consider his and Anthony Matteo's defense of "moral realism." In the attempt to legitimate their conventional suburban morality, they end up buying into the most pedestrian variety of liberalism and articulating the kind of dogmatic scientistic axiology popularized in the 1950s by American sociology. There is absolutely nothing *traditional* or *conservative* in that. As in the wooden Parsonian functionalism of yesteryear, their ethical norms are not ground in any transcendental system of belief or foundational mythology constitutive of conceptual frameworks; rather, they are presented as "cultural assumptions . . . necessary to allow authentic communities to function and coexist." Why would *soi disant* conservatives take what has historically been the cultural anthropologists' road to relativism to legitimate a particularly superficial brand of conventional

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morality obsessed with child prostitution, homosexuality, gender differences, mass murders etc.? The answer is surprisingly simple: because they have already accepted the kind of relativism they claim to reject, i.e., they have realized that moral systems predicated on *traditional* and *transcendental* foundations find themselves surrounded by a plethora of competing systems of equally traditionally and transcendentally grounded ethical norms exhibiting exactly the same epistemologically impeccable credentials and thus subverting any claim to absoluteness. Gottfried and Matteo think they can vindicate the absoluteness of their conventional axiological systems merely by fudging all normative differences, thus reducing all cultural particularities to idiosyncratic variations of the same "necessary cultural assumptions" understood as the embodiment of "natural law." Even if such a pedestrian strategy were successful, however, it would only legitimate the New Class' liberal metaphysics of "self-evident rights" and ideals used to justify not only the kind of one-world government paleoconservatives constantly rave about, but also state intervention into all facets of everyday life to enforce "political correctness."

Space does not allow to even begin to indicate the problems with Gottfried's functionalist defense of conventional morality other than by reformulating his own minimalist preconditions for normative legitimacy. By reversing his strict functionalist criterion for the validity of cultural assumptions, any particular norm that does not threaten the existence of a community — no matter how odious or repulsive to genteel suburban taste — is automatically legitimated as *ipso facto* consistent with "natural law." It is useless to attempt to demonstrate that no society *really* condoned homosexual marriages, child prostitution, genocide, burning witches, smoking, streaking, mooning, etc., since it is possible not only to show that such societies could readily function, but also that there are concrete instances one can point to: modern Thailand, the Aztecs, ancient Greece, Nazi Germany, 17th century New England, 20th century US, etc. Bickering about particular details is beside the point: the war with the relativists has already been lost. Far from helping "restore a non-socially engineered communal life" as Gottfried claims, to the extent they are predicated on the facticity of existing social relations, no matter what their nature, functionalist arguments cannot deal with transcendental beliefs or traditional morality other than as cultural curiosities. They are part and parcel of New Class ideology and eventually become the basis for social engineering. It is all too easy to translate what "social science" certifies as social imperatives into politically correct and universally binding ethical norms. The recent inventions of "domestic violence," "child abuse," "bias crimes," "anti-smoking regulations," etc. are only some of the most blatant examples of this strategy, meant to deal with the disruptions brought about by community disintegration but whose ultimate result is the further disintegration of whatever internalized community norms remain.

Having bought into the assumptions of their liberal adversaries, the "conservatives" do not have a chance against their New Class opponents. It is all too

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easy to show that social science is much better at identifying the detrimental or beneficial impact of particular cultural norms than "moral realists" embroiled in a self-contradictory conventional morality they can only defend by borrowing their opponents' own tools. Consequently, all they end up doing is defending the enthymemes of the absolutist morality they originally chose not to defend on traditional and transcendental grounds. Take the *prima faciae* absurdities well known for driving the Right up the wall, such as the legalization of homosexual marriages. Instead of pointing out the extent to which these demands are the results of welfare state intrusion into what was primarily religious, familial or communal matter and, far from merely normalizing homosexuality, has really to do with what the state has imposed on relations between people, "conservatives" prefer to brand homosexual marriages "odious modernist superstitions" and confuse opposition to them with their now "politically incorrect" personal disapproval of homosexual practices. Obviously, if marriage is seen primarily in terms of biological reproduction, homosexual marriages make no sense. But marriage has become loaded with much more social and economic baggage, and that is what homosexuals in relatively stable relations are most worried about. Thus the issue has nothing to do with natural law or reproduction, but with pensions, inheritance laws, social benefits, tenants rights, etc. In charging the windmills of "homosexual marriages," conservatives implicitly relegitimate state intrusion in communal matters by calling for further state intervention to define and regulate matters which should be kept beyond its reach.

It would have been much easier, and much more "realistic," to take the transcendental and the traditional road, regard the good as part of a precategorical dimension never fully translatable into particular normative codes, and thus accept the cultural particularity of modes of access to the good as an inherent characteristic of collective social being — a traditional strategy Catherine Pickstock rightly reiterates as foundational for Western thought and initially fully articulated by none other than Socrates. It is not a matter of getting "natural law" right once and for all, since the good cannot be captured in this way — what liberals and moral realist pseudo-conservatives seek — but of reconstituting communities able to produce autonomous individuals who can deal with morality in the Socratic fashion. The political implications of such a traditional strategy — more "conservative" than the current capitulatory aberrations of moral realists and more "radical" than Left nihilism and relativism — are also more in accord both with the Right's historical commitment to decentralization, local autonomy and personal responsibility, and the Left's concern with cultural particularity and social justice. It would go beyond currently obsolete nation states attempting to homogenize heterogeneous populations by means of immense government bureaucracies and would prefigure federal or confederal arrangements to guarantee the particular cultural configuration of morality within organic communities able to provide both personal identity and moral guidance.

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Reply to Aviezer Tucker

Krzysztof Michalski

For the first time in its 13 year history, the Institute for Human Sciences finds itself under attack — a campaign of villification conducted by a single individual: Aviezer Tucker. Since institutions such as IWM (Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menscen) rely so heavily on the strength of their international reputation, it is essential to respond decisively to this attempt to tarnish its reputation, however unfounded and poorly formulated the allegations may be.

Tucker was born in Tel Aviv in 1965. He wrote a dissertation for the University of Maryland titled "The Philosophy of Charter 77 Signatories." He has been a resident of the Czech Republic since 1992, during which time he has been active in the Faculty of Philosophy at Palacky University in Olomouc. Contacts between Tucker and IWM began with his application of February 15, 1994 for a stipendium — a Junior Visiting Fellowship — for the second half of that year. One among many applications (about 80) for very few slots, his was turned down. His letter of rejection — a form letter sent to all applicants who were not awarded stipends — was sent to Tucker on April 13, 1994. On May 11, 1994, Tucker wrote to IWM asking why his application was rejected. But this was no simple request for information, since his letter contained not only insinuations that he was rejected because he is Jewish ("You may be simply anti-Semitic or at least anti-Israel and anti-Zionist") but already a threat of retaliation — to publicly defame IWM.

On May 18, 1994 we responded to Tucker's letter, stating clearly that the sole reason for his not being chosen was the high number of qualified candidates and that there was no reason to suspect that any discrimination lay behind IWM's decisions. Then we received a letter (addressed personally to me), dated July 10, 1994, from Prof. Eva Gewurzman of the Israeli Academic Commission in Tel Aviv, alleging discrimination against an Israeli citizen. On July 26, 1994, I wrote to Prof. Gewurzman giving the same explanation we had given Tucker on May 18, and enclosed all the information about IWM and its programs, as well as further information she had requested, such as names of successful candidates, etc. Then I received a letter from Prof. Gewurzman with the specific request for ". . . a policy of active recruitment of Israeli scholars for your Institute . . . ."

In a letter dated October 6, 1994, I wrote to Prof. Gewurzman disapproving of her suggestion: "We . . . do not keep national quotas. We do not exclude anybody from the institute because he or she is an Israeli, but neither do we invite anybody

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just because he or she is a citizen of a country. Israel is not an exception in this regard . . . ." On this same day, I asked Lord Weidenfeld also to respond to Prof. Gewurzman, which he did in a letter dated October 13, 1994: "I would like to bear witness to the fact that the Institute of Human Sciences in Vienna, with which I have been associated for five years, has been scrupulously fair in its dealing with the topic of Israel and the Middle East, and indeed very supportive of both the Jewish/Christian and Europe/Israel dialogue."

The rejection of Tucker's application was entirely in accord with normal procedure. Morover, both Tucker's and Gewurzman's inquiries regarding our decision were correctly and promptly answered, despite the fact that both contained insinuations and threats, and despite the fact that we were under no obligation to provide such information. Since then, we have received no further inquiries from Gewurzman. But on May 2, 1995, Tucker offered the Vienna daily *Der Standard* an article titled "Sleazy in Vienna: Krzysztof Michalski and the Institute for Human Sciences." *Der Standard* rejected publication and brought the matter to the attention of IWM. But this was not the end of it, as attested to by the letter of Lord Dahrendorf, a patron of IWM council, to both Tucker and Gewurzman rejecting their demands for him to take steps against the IWM.

Then, in the Winter 1995 issue of *Telos*,[1] which appeared early in 1996, there appeared an article by Tucker titled "Corruption and Greed: Western Academic Aid to Eastern Europe." After calling for a critique of Western academic aid to Eastern Europe, he soon turns to a direct attack on IWM. I and my colleagues, as well as a series of people and institutions that work with or support IWM, are singled out by name and accused of corruption and "nepotism." Meanwhile, Tucker's main line of criticism takes a different turn: the reproach of anti-Semitism and the insinuation of discriminating against Israeli citizens fades into the background. His unsuccessful application to the IWM, which was still the reason for action in his initial correspondence, is unmentioned. In the forefront now is the reproach — previously unmentioned — about the misuse of funds entrusted to IWM for the support of East European research. Since then the following foundations that work with IWM have informed us they have received copies of Tucker's article as well as letters containing similar allegations: The Ford Foundation; The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation; The Rockefeller Brothers Fund; The Volkswagen Foundation; The Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

In his *Telos* article, Tucker characterizes the IWM as: "A near perfect example of all types of corruption" (p. 153). He supports this claim with "evidence" that in each instance can be proven to be wholly erroneous.

1. Tucker claims that I as the Director of IWM, have embezzled and misappropriated funds for personal gain: ". . . he has been using this institute as a front

1. Aviezer Tucker, "Corruption and Greed: Academic Aid to Eastern Europe," in *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995), pp. 149-158.

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to channel money from the European Community, Austrian public sources, and private donors to students from his home institution, Boston University, and to other clients. Excessive funds have been misspent on a lavish building and guest-lectures by Western academic 'stars,' whose patronage Michalski wishes to buy, excluding the East Europeans for whom the money was intended." (p. 154) The books and accounting records of IWM can verify that the visits of students from Boston University and guest lecturers from Western countries, as well as the furnishing of the Institute, have been financed exclusively with funds *not* allocated for the support of Central and East European academics. The proper distribution of all funds at the disposal of IWM from public and private sponsors for a specific use fall under the precise and regular supervision of both the sponsors themselves (in accordance with their strict requirements) as well as of the internal commission that inspects IWM's accounting, which includes independent experts. Furthermore, the IWM's entire bookkeeping procedure is supervised by the GRT-Revisions and Treuhand-Gesellschaft, a sister organization of Price Waterhouse.

From the outset, IWM has been routinely obligated by its supporters to provide proof, in the form of reports, that the allocated funds are spent exclusively for the given purposes fixed by the approval of allocation or contract. Since the founding of the Institute, there has not been one single complaint by a sponsor. All funds allocated to the IWM for East European academics have been deployed in accordance with the sponsors' requirements.

2. Tucker claims that I as the Director have withheld funds intended for East European students and given them to Boston University students. Our records show clearly that 27 out of a total of 36 Junior Visiting Fellows from Boston that were invited to IWM between 1989 and 1996 were funded directly by Boston University. The money for their stipends was awarded exclusively for the support of BU's own students and was paid directly to them. Seven stipends were financed by the Bradley Foundation, also for the support of young academics from the USA. One stipend, for a student from Portugal, was financed by the European Culture Foundation, another with discretionary funds.

3. Tucker claims: "The IWM grants 'Junior Visiting Fellowships,' purportedly for promising young scholars of Eastern Europe, to pursue research in Vienna for six months" (p. 154). But in the IWM brochure, which Tucker explicitly cites as the source of all his information, the program focus is unequivocally stated: "Since 1989, IWM has awarded Junior Visiting Fellowships to support promising young scholars in the humanities and social sciences. From 1993 on, around twenty Junior Visiting Fellows from Europe and the United States will be invited each year for a six-month term . . . to pursue their research in Vienna under the direction of the Institute's Permanent and Visiting Fellows." (p. 14). This clearly attests to the fact that the Junior Visiting Fellowship program is in no way exclusively limited to young academics from Eastern Europe.

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4. Tucker claims that between 1989 and 1993 IWM has "diverted" as much as $197,000 to doctoral candidates at Boston University (p. 155). The facts of the matter are quite different. The Junior Visiting Fellows program was created in 1989, with the support of Boston University, which wanted to offer some of its particularly qualified doctoral candidates the opportunity for a one-semester research stay at IWM, and which allocated funds from its own budget for this purpose. In recent years, IWM has succeeded in enlisting other foundations in the USA and Western Europe to follow the example of Boston University and become involved in this program. Over time, it has become possible to extend the program quantitatively and to diversify with respect to the national and professional background of the Junior Fellows. Until now, a total of 98 young academics have spent a research stay of six months at IWM as Junior Visiting Fellows: 40 from Central and Eastern Europe; 17 from Western Europe; and 41 from the USA. In all, IWM has raised more than $800,000 for this program, and this money was passed on to the Junior Visiting Fellows in the form of stipends: 25 Junior Visiting Fellows from the USA (and 2 Boston University students from Western Europe) were funded by Boston University, 10 by the Bradley Foundation, 2 by Pew Charitable Trusts, 1 by New York University, and 1 by discretionary funds. The fellowships for young academics from Western Europe were funded by the European Culture Foundation (11), the Volkswagen Foundation (3) and the Austrian Ministry of Science (1). Funds for inviting Junior Visiting Fellows from Central and Eastern Europe came from the Batory Foundation (9.5), the Open Society Institute (7.5), the Volkswagen Foundation (11), the Ford Foundation (10) and the European Cultural Foundation (1 and 2 partial stipends). The remaining two were financed by the Junior Fellows themselves.

The Junior Visiting Fellows program is funded almost exclusively by various foundations (incidentally, the same is true for IWM Visiting Fellowships). These foundations grant the requested funds in accordance with their own criteria for support, the result being that as a rule the allocation of funds is bound to certain conditions that, for the most part, have to do with the national or regional backgrounds of the young academics to be supported. IWM sees its task as one of combining the various individual interests of foundations in such a way as to result in an overall program consistent with the objectives of the Institute — in this case, among other things, achieving the most numerically balanced ratio of fellows from East and West.

5. Tucker claims: "There is no open competition or public announcements for fellows. Instead, Michalski and Klinger select the visiting fellows, largely on the basis of personal patronage." But the Junior Visiting Fellowships of IWM are publicly announced in fliers distributed in universities all over Central and Eastern Europe as well as Western Europe and the US (mainly on the East Coast), as well as in announcements in the *IWM-Newsletter* (circulation of about 6,000 in

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English and German). Since last year, the Fellowships have been announced via IWM's Home Page on the World Wide Web. The applications received are read by the Permanent Fellows and other academic colleagues of IWM (the IWM-Kollegium), who subsequently, in a formal meeting to consider the qualifications of the candidates, make the selection of fellows. The fellowships for the IWM Translation Program are also publicly announced. This program has existed since 1987; 6 half-year stipends were awarded for 1996. Applications are assessed by a committee of experts, the members of which change annually. This year the committee convened on March 23 to nominate the best candidates for 1997 from the 86 applicants.

As for the invitation of the remaining Visiting Fellows, IWM follows the international practice of institutes for advanced study; there is no formally set procedure of application. Rather, IWM continually searches for suitable candidates, assisted by members of the Academic Advisory Board and former Fellows. The good reputation of IWM as a place of first class academic research, of a productive exchange among different fields of knowledge, and of a lively interdisciplinary dialogue has become so widely known that scholars have now begun to apply for Visiting Fellowships on their own initiative. In its consideration of these also, IWM adheres strictly to the principles of qualifications and relevance. Above all, it considers the academic achievement of candidates and the importance of the candidate's field of research to the thematic research concerns of IWM. Another factor of consideration is the desire to create a diverse community of scholars, which means we strive to achieve national variety and academic complementarity. Then there is the feasibility of financing a certain individual with the particular funds at the disposal of IWM for inviting Fellows, which as I mentioned before, are often earmarked by the sponsors for people of a particular nationality or academic background. Finally, the selection of Fellows is a joint decision made by the IWM-Kollegium.

Tucker's own application for a Junior Visiting Fellowship at IWM for the second half of 1994 was not successful because, in the opinion of the IWM-Kollegium, other qualified applicants were more worthy of support. The Jan Patocka Fellowship, for which Tucker applied, was awarded to a young Czech philosopher from Palacky University in Olomouc. He was able to show relevant preparatory work in the field of Patocka studies and, during the time of his research stay at IWM, he produced a book, *Jan Patocka and the Reception of Phenomenology in Czech Philosophy*, and completed some additional essays on related topics.

6. Tucker accuses IWM of open anti-Semitism. This is difficult to prove or disprove, since IWM does not keep statistics on the faiths or religious denominations of its Fellows. To do so would be contrary to the fundamental principles on which IWM is founded. But the purpose of IWM is to contribute to the dismantling of divisions and exclusions, the eradication of prejudices and the alleviation of misunderstandings, whether of an intellectual, social, political or religious

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nature. IWM has concerned itself with aspects of the clearly important religious-political dialogue in its conferences such as "Jews, Poles and Ukrainians in Galacia 1772-1918" (1992) and "Europe of Religions" (1994) and has won respect and academic distinction from many sides for this work.

7. Tucker complains of the waste of funds by IWM for its own purposes to the detriment of East European academics: "In 1992 the IWM moved to a lavish new building at Spittelauer Lände 3. I do not know how much it cost to purchase and refurbish the building, but by all appearances it must have been more than the IWM has ever invested in East European scholars" (p. 155). This insinuation is simply false. IWM did not buy the building in which it is housed; it rents it from an Austrian bank. Actually, the cost of rent and furnishings is only a fraction of the transfer of funds to Central and East European scholars, as is documented in IWM's accounting records. But more to the point, the IWM building is the facility in which visiting scholars do their work. The offices, kitchen, library and common rooms are at the disposal of all IWM Fellows — including the 50% who come from Central and Eastern Europe — and, thus, the spending on the building constitutes an important part of the support to scholars.

8. Tucker claims: "The IWM has also been paying honoraria to academic 'stars,' none living in Eastern Europe, which are thinly veiled junkets that have more to do with Michalski's upper mobility than with East European research. These junkets receive names like 'Tuesday Lectures' and 'Wednesday Club'," (p. 155). Along these same lines, he criticizes the "Jan Patocka Memorial Lectures," which have been organized by IWM yearly since 1987, suggesting that the lecturers are paid fantastic sums. In fact, individuals invited to speak in the Tuesday Lectures or the Wednesday Club series of IWM have been East and West Europeans as well as Americans, and they have all been reimbursed only for the costs of travel and accommodation. This fact, too, can in each case be readily established through the accounts of IWM and corresponding book-keeping receipts. The "Jan Patocka Memorial Lecture" occurs once a year. To date, the speakers have been Hans-Georg Gadamer (1987), Leszek Kolakowski (1988), Zbigniew Brzezinski (1989), Paul Ricoeur (1990), Charles Taylor (1991), Jacques Derrida (1992), Mario Vargas Llosa (1993), François Furet (1994) and George Soros (1995). Not only are these memorial lectures, they are forums of lively, contemporary philosophical debate in the spirit of Patocka. Speakers receive a standard honorarium of $1,000, on the condition that they grant to the IWM all publication rights to their lecture. All three programs are public, recognized and well-attended events.

9. Tucker also insinuates there is corruption, self interest and misappropriation of funds in the two programs instituted by IWM for the advancement of the reform process in education and research: the Hannah Arendt Prize and the European

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Chairs Program: "Since the prize is earmarked for East European universities, it is impossible to divert the money westward, as Michalski has been doing with all of the IWM's other projects. However, 'Candidates for the prize will be nominated by the IWM on behalf of and in consultation with the Körber Foundation.' The IWM has also been financing a program of 'European Chairs' for respectable academics to teach in Eastern Europe. This is not only corrupt, but wasteful. If academic stars (competent as they may be) deliver a series of guest lectures in a university, it will not change much" (p.156). As regards the Hannah Arendt Prize, he cites the first sentence of the paragraph from IWM's published announcement explaining the selection process, but omits the second, which reads: "Correspondents of IWM in respective countries will propose candidates, and the final decision will be made by a jury." The correspondents are established, well-informed experts in questions of institutional structural reform, who are predominantly from the countries taking part in the competition (in 1994/95, 32 East European correspondents were involved in the competition; in 1995/96, 24). IWM assigns to them the task of nominating candidates, so that it is assured the selection of institutions taking part in the competition is the result of a vote by colleagues in the region — through a type of peer review. The final selection of the winner is made by an international committee under the chairmanship of Lord Dahrendorf.

The charge of corruption with respect to the European chairs is groundless and is in no way substantiated by Tucker. It is not even clear what the corruption is supposed to amount to, if "respectable academics," as Tucker himself formulates it, are invited to East European universities. From that, he asserts that such a project is "wasteful," and "will not change much." On what is Tucker's judgment based and what gives him the authority even to make a judgment? His colleagues at the Faculty of Law at Palacky University in Olomouc, where one of the European Chairs he criticizes has been established (in the field of comparative European law) have reached a different conclusion. As their interim report a year after the inauguration of this Chair shows, this program is considered to be extraordinarily helpful and effective in the constitution of a new academic, pedagogical and research competency in a field that, before 1989, had either been systematically neglected or deformed in Eastern Europe.

The specific conception and content of every European Chair, as well as the selection of the professors to be appointed, is the result of close cooperation on an equal basis between the host institution and IWM. This task is in turn supported by an appointment commission formed specifically for this purpose, which includes representatives of the host university and international experts. There is no question this program is merely a series of guest lectures held by "academic stars." Knowing that such sporadic guest lectures would result in no structural change, the European Chairs are as a rule set up for a period of four to five semesters, and also involve activities to educate local junior professors. The salaries of those who hold guest professorships are replaced (given directly to

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their home university) for the duration of their activity as a European Chair. Beyond that, travel and on-site accommodation costs are covered. The host university receives at most a modest sum for books or other necessary equipment to facilitate the teaching activities and research of the guest. The program is financed and carefully monitored by the European Commission.

It is clear that Tucker has far overstepped the bounds of anything that can be legitimately defended as freedom of speech — both in his charges and in his actions. Since his accusations are factually false, IWM is exploring possibilities of taking legal action against him. But since friends and supporters, colleagues and collaborators of the IWM already are confronted with Tucker's writings and are affected by his accusations, I have taken this opportunity to provide information to refute these charges.

Rejoinder to Michalski

Aviezer Tucker

Krzysztof Michalski's response to my exposure of the corrupt management of his institute is based on three classical techniques of disinformation: 1) He provides irrelevant information to confuse the reader and create the impression that his conclusions are factually based. In fact, he withholds the relevant information and does not address the issues. 2) He misrepresents the accusations made against the IWM's corrupt practices in order to appear to refute them. Michalski argues against accusation X that was never made, but wants readers to have the impression that he has successfully argued against accusation Y, which is actually true. Michalski's response argues against accusations that were never made but avoids addressing real issues. 3) Since he cannot defend the IWM's corrupt character, Michalski resorts to irrelevant speculations concerning the motives for the exposure. What is really at issue, however, is the fate of East European higher education reform. No one, including myself, is really interested in whether or not I receive a six months fellowship. Here are some of the flaws in Michalski's response to my accusations.

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1. Michalski claims I accused him of embezzlement and misappropriation. I have never accused him of moving money from the IWM to some private Swiss bank account. I did accused him, however, of buying academic patronage with money raised for research about Eastern Europe and cooperation with East European academics. I have never accused Michalski of embezzling the minor funds earmarked for Eastern Europeans. But the major funds that the IWM gets for general institutional purposes are at the discretion of the directors (Mr. and Mrs. Michalski). These funds are raised for East-West cooperation and research but are misused for patrons and clients. An accounting office will make sure that money does not disappear from the books, but cannot criticize the values that underlie a crooked distribution of funds. The fig leaf of bookkeeping cannot conceal the questionable nature of the IWM's practices.

As Michalski admits, about half of the Junior Visiting Fellows came from his department of philosophy of Boston University. He claims that the stipends of 27 of the 36 students came from Boston University, 7 were funded by the Bradley foundation that finances only Americans, one by "discretionary funds," and one by the European Community. He fails to mention that of the 10 fellowships that the Bradley foundation financed for the most qualified Americans, 7 went to Boston University. Could it be that there are more than twice as many qualified promising young scholars of Eastern Europe in Boston University than in the rest of the US? Further, the IWM's brochure states on pp. 14-15 that the IWM's Junior Visiting Fellowships are awarded "to support promising young scholars in the humanities and social sciences . . . from Europe and the United States . . ."

IWM advertisements say nothing about any obligation to choose nearly half of the fellows from Boston University's department of philosophy. The IWM is surely guilty at least of misleading advertisements. Further, at any one time there are 4 permanent fellows, about 10 visiting fellows, and about 10 junior visiting fellows in the IWM (i.e., about 20% of the people who are on a relatively permanent basis in the IWM are Boston University students from the department of philosophy). The money for the building, equipment, and presumably the Western fellows, is raised for cooperation with East Europeans and research, not for Bostonians. One fifth of the general budget of the IWM is allocated for the benefit of Boston University graduate students. Boston University's department of philosophy has managed to gain a cheap second campus and a very expensive faculty in Vienna at the expense of Eastern Europeans for whom the funds were raised.

2. When I wrote that the junior fellows are supposed to be promising scholars of Eastern Europe, I meant they are supposed to do promising research on East European topics, not that they are to be East Europeans, as Michalski puts it. My criticism is that if both the IWM advertisement is accurate and the Institute's practices fair, then one may deduce that half of the promising young scholars of Eastern Europe are in Boston University's department of philosophy, and there

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are seven times as many promising young scholars of Eastern Europe in Boston as than in the rest of the US.

3. A revealing paragraph in the IWM's reply is the following: "The Junior Visiting Fellows program is funded almost exclusively with funds from various foundations (incidentally, the same is true for IWM Visiting Fellowships). These foundations grant the requested funds in accordance with their own criteria for support, the result being that as a rule the allocation of funds is bound to certain conditions that, for the most part, have to do with the national or regional backgrounds of the young academics to be supported. . . ." But, on the other hand, it is claimed that: "The Junior Visiting Fellowships of IWM are publicly announced. . . . The applications that are received are read by the Permanent Fellows and other academic colleagues of IWM, who subsequently, in a formal meeting to consider the qualifications of the candidates, together make the selection of who shall be invited." And in the IWM advertisement it is written: "The program gives promising young scholars in the humanities and social sciences an opportunity to pursue their research in Vienna. . . ." The first quoted paragraph is inconsistent with the following two. Either the fellowships are granted by the foundations on the basis of national and regional origin and the IWM only maintains East-West balance; or the fellowships are granted by the foundation on the basis of "qualifications" and "promise." If the first is true and the second is false, the IWM has strived to maintain a façade of merit and excellence whereas the fellowships are based on other criteria. This is the first time that the IWM admits publicly that fellowships are not granted on the basis of qualifications and certain sections of the academic world, most American not from Boston and other non-Europeans (e.g., Canadians), need not apply because there are no funds for them. What is the point of distributing announcements in the US if 88% of fellowships to Americans will be granted to students of the Boston University philosophy department? This wastes the time of prospective applicants and creates the false impression that students of department of philosophy at Boston University are selected on the basis of merit. Still, perhaps the first paragraph is imprecise and, according to the following two, the IWM does have control of the fellowships, in which case it is responsible for their unfair distribution.

4. Michalski's response practically admits that Visiting Fellowships are granted on the basis of patronage: "IWM follows the international practice of institutes for advanced study: there is no formally set procedure of application. Rather, the IWM is continually searching for suitable candidates. In this, IWM is assisted in this by members of the Academic Advisory Board and former Fellows, who choose exceptionally qualified scholars. . . . In its consideration of these, as of and any candidates, IWM adheres strictly to the principles of qualifications and relevance — above all, it considers the academic achievement of candidates and the importance of the candidate's field of research to the thematic

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research concerns of IWM." It is not true that institutes for advanced study usually have no application procedures. The "mother" of all institutes of advanced study, the one in Princeton, has yearly competitions. More significantly, how qualified are IWM fellows? I have pointed to the case of Prof. Jean Cohen from Columbia University who received the fellowship in 1994 partly to organize a conference in Prague from which she excluded Czechs and ran away from Prague together with Cornelia Klinger after half a conference so she did not have to listen to "inferior" Americans and Germans whom she scheduled in the second half of the conference. This year (1996) Cohen's patron, Prof. Seyla Benhabib from Harvard, received the fellowship. Benhabib also participated in half of the conference that Cohen organized in Prague and also avoided contact with Czechs. When this offensive and discriminatory conference was criticized,[2] Benhabib wrote an open letter in defence of her behavior (dated November 14, 1994) that demonstrates her qualifications as a scholar of Eastern Europe and Jan Patocka: ". . . most significantly, there are serious intellectual tensions between the dominant traditions of the history of philosophy and the phenomenological Heideggerianism of philosophy departments in Prague and our own approaches. You cannot expect us to become Patocka followers in order to initiate a dialogue with Czech philosophers and intellectuals. If this cannot happen on the basis of mutual respect and willingness to understand each others' traditions and positions, and if we have to bear the brunt of anti-left attacks on the Frankfurt School, then so be it! Maybe a constructive dialogue with Czech intellectuals will not be possible for us at this time. However, I think this conclusion is wrong. We have met individuals like Joseph Moral at the University, and we have invited them to organize a number of political as well as intellectual sessions this coming Spring. . . ."

Obviously, Benhabib does not know the first thing about Czech philosophy and intellectuals. The little that she knows, she does not like. She does not know that most Czech intellectuals are outside academia and that Arendt was a major influence on Jan Patocka. How can she know? She came to Prague for three days and avoided Czechs. She has not come back to Prague and did not arrange cooperation with Czechs (academic or "political"). So why should this snobbish Harvard Socialist who does not know anything about Eastern Europe and has no interest in learning receive a fellowship from the IWM? This is the result of a patronage system that selects fellows according to expected favors rather than merit.

5. The word "antiSemite/ism" appears nowhere in my article. I did write that there has never been an Israeli fellow in the IWM and that Michalski wrote to an Israeli academic that, because of the sad history of Eastern Europe, his mother would call a request to have Israelis in the IWM a "shame," and that he cannot expect the Israeli to share his mother's moral sensibility. The exclusion of Israelis seems suspicious because of the high quality of research about Central and

2. Aviezer Tucker, "No Czechs or Dogs Allowed: The Former Praxis International in Prague," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Spring 1994), pp. 255-258.

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Eastern Europe and the history of Jews in these areas in Israel (conducted largely by immigrants from that part of the world). Michalski's letter strengthens this suspicion. Whether or not Michalski is anti-Semitic, there is something peculiar about writing a letter to Israel calling a request for sensitivity for the history of Jews in Eastern Europe a "shame."

6. The so-called "Arendt Prize" ("so-called" because Arendt, who died in 1975, had family that has not been consulted about the use of the name) is not open for free competition. Whether or not the patronage lineage of some of Michalski's Eastern European friends are involved does not make the program substantially more open.

The IWM's response does not reveal the cost of their "European Chairs" program. My sources revealed a figure of 100,000 ECU per-chair. In evaluating whether this program is wasteful, consider possible alternative uses of this money. Each European chair is equivalent to an academic library of five thousands (5000) volumes, or the yearly academic salary of 50 East European lecturers. For the money that was wasted on these European chairs, it would have been possible to build the first modern research library in Eastern Europe.

The important new information that emerges out of Michalski's response is the role of incompetent and corrupt foundations behind the IWM. The important issue and the subject of my article is: How and why, 6 years after the democratic revolutions is there still no single research library in Eastern Europe? How and why have universities not been radically reformed yet? These are scandals! The IWM is a symptom of the corrupt and wasteful attitudes of Western foundations that are supposed to distribute funds for reforming East European higher education. The money never gets to Eastern Europe. Instead of libraries, the money is wasted on celebrities. Instead of young scholars from Eastern Europe, the money is wasted on junkets for Western patrons. The IWM is just one prominent example of a prevailing trend. In the larger scheme of things, Michalski is a small fish swimming in a polluted pond. The task at hand is to pressure foundations to spend their money honestly and effectively on libraries and reformed young academics. Exposures of corrupt practices and policies, such as the IWM's, is useful for ending them, creating a new democratic academic culture, and pressuring foundations to do the right things. East Europeans suffered the Communist *apparatchiki* for forty years. They deserve better than the IWM and the Western celebrity junketeers.

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Reviews:

From The Dialectics of the Concrete *to Charter 77*

Karel Kosík, *The Crisis of Modernity: Essays and Observations from the 1968 Era*, ed. by James H. Satterwhite, (Lanham Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995), xi + 239 pp.

Henri Declève, ed., *Profils de Jan Patocka* (Brussels: Publications des Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, 1992), 192pp.

Petr Rezek, *Filosofie a politika kú e* (Prague: Oikoymenh, 1991), 107pp.

Karel Kosík has been read differently in the West and in Czechoslovakia. In the West, he was seen as part of 1960s trends searching for humanist versions of Marxism compatible with other continental philosophical schools. His synthesis of Marxism and Heideggerian phenomenology in *The Dialectics of the Concrete*[1] was as popular as the work Lukács in Hungary and the *Praxis* group in Yugoslavia. During the 1980s this interest petered out. After 1989 and the collapse of so-called Marxist regimes, trendy 1970s Marxist intellectuals jumped on the Habermasian or de-constructionist bandwagons. The smooth transition of many leaders of the Yugoslav *Praxis* group from "humanist" Marxism to genocidal nationalism has further discredited their ideas.

When *The Dialectics of the Concrete* appeared in 1963, it marked the beginning of a post-doctrinaire period in Czechoslovak philosophy. Like Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty in the US today, Kosík was not a very original thinker; also like them, he came from the heart of the academic establishment. When such figures espouse hitherto marginal or forbidden opinions, it means it is acceptable to deviate from previously orthodox positions, whether analytical philosophy or Marxism-Leninism. By 1968, however, Kosík was at the head of the writers union and the rear-guard of reform. A younger generation of non-Marxist intellectuals centered around the journal *Tvar* had become the avant-garde and Kosík was already a transitional figure.

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1. The first translation of parts of Kosík's *magnum opus* appeared in *Telos* in 1968. For the full translation, see Karel Kosík, *The Dialectics of the Concrete*, tr. by Karel Kovanda and James Schmidt (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1976).

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James Satterwhite, the editor and a translator of *The Crisis of Modernity*, provides an informative introduction to Kosík's thought in the context of humanist Marxism and the *Praxis* group. Major lacunae here, however, are the relation between Kosík and his teacher, Jan Patocka, to whom Kosík has paid homage in most of his public pronouncements since 1989, and relations between Kosík and his fellow dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s. A partisan and party member since before the revolution and a graduate of Leningrad University, Kosík was a child of the communist establishment. This made his revisionism meaningful in 1963, but irrelevant by 1968. After Patocka's Charter 77 united the dissident movement in 1977, Kosík was no longer part of "mainstream" opposition. Though he was expelled from the Communist Party after the 1968 invasion, he remained a Marxist. His philosophy corresponds to Dubcek's politics. The collapse of the Prague Spring after Dubcek's surrender discredited reform communism. Kosík remained behind the times by keeping faith in the ideals of 1968 long after most Czech dissidents had dismissed them.

Kosík articulates some of the dominant themes of oppositional East European and Czech philosophy such as the affirmation of the intrinsic value of *truth* and life in the face of external challenges.[2] He emphasizes the inauthenticity and de-humanization of the communist system: "The anonymity of the masses responds to the irresponsibility of the manipulators. A system of masses and manipulators is a system of generalized irresponsibility . . . the system functions merely to instill mass false consciousness as the presupposition of its own existence, and any attempt at critical assessment is rejected as heresy and sacrilege" (18-19). He describes how the system's "natural selection" chooses leaders who are: "of mediocre intelligence, obsequiousness, weak character — people who are obedient and faithful, loaded with prejudices and governed by resentments. . . . Any other attribute or ability, from the point of view of their needs, is superfluous or detrimental" (19). In the Czech tradition, Kosík despises political pragmatists. His heroes are Masaryk, Luxemburg, Lenin, and Gramsci. He espouses a politics of meaning rather than of shallow pragmatic manipulation, constituting reality through ideological images. His naive solution to bureaucratic manipulation is a political alliance of workers, peasants, the intelllgentsia and youth. Human rights are necessary for releasing the working class' political potential. He articulates "standard" Heideggerian criticisms of modernity, science and technology as an objectifying manipulating unity, but acknowledges the indispensability of technology. He just wants to limit that technological rationality that does not admit what cannot be controlled and manipulated. He protests that the rule of capital has been replaced by bureaucratic manipulation. Yet he still calls for the "socialization" of the means of production and disregards the innovative nature of capitalism.

Following Rathenau, Husserl, Heidegger, and Jünger, Kosík criticizes the crisis

2. See Aviezer Tucker, "Václav Havel's Heideggerianism," in *Telos* 85 (Fall 1990), pp. 63-78; "Sacrifice: From Isaac to Patocka" in *Telos* 91 (Spring 1992), pp. 117-124; "Patocka vs. Heidegger: The Humanistic Difference" in *Telos* 92 (Summer 1992), pp. 85-98.

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of subjectivism, making the subject into an object and impersonal forces into subjects. Relations between man and world, being and time are in deep crisis. When everything is reduced to exchange value, the intrinsic value of things disappears and with it the intrinsic value of man. Modern man has lost what is essential; everything must be produced and exchanged. This is true, but not very original.

Kosík is well-read in Czech intellectual history and has interesting insights. He also has interesting things to say about life in communist countries. But except for his analysis of laughter and humor under totalitarianism, this anthology has no new critical insight into *modernity*. Along with Hannah Arendt, he notes the similarities between the Nazi and Stalinist regimes (the camp system, totalitarianism, authoritarianism, etc.) But after a long analysis of Stalinism and Nazism, he suddenly remembers that his topic is modernism: ". . . the market also appropriates people in its own way, as it throws them into its working and transforms them into *its own* appurtenances" (173). The connections between the units of Kosík's anti-modernist ideas are associative at best. From Heideggerian raw material, he moves on to a modernity that liquifies everything, leading to liquidation of political opponents. Dissolving everything leads to Lukács' bad dialectics. Then, he has something against transportation and mobility as associated with concentration camps, people in transit: "People are not only driven out of their homes by some external, foreign power, but for other reasons as well: their own discontent, diminished curiosity, an obsession with traveling no matter what, simply to relieve boredom and long intervals, and to do away with the feeling of homelessness and rootlessness, and by that existential uncertainty that the thinker called '*das Unbehagen*' [malaise]. Banishment and homelessness are not only categories concerning those who have been expelled, persecuted, or exiled. These categories also involve a majority of people — people who have lost their *center*, who have thus lost their true home and run from thing to thing, from one aimlessness to another, always in the vain hope that beauty and home are somewhere else" (175).

In the 1968 articles there is a clear sense of epoch making, of the historical test of the Humanist-Marxist alternative. The failure of "Communism with a Human Face" was due to external forces and the spinelessness of *apparatchiki* that capitulated instead of leading popular resistance. With the exception of Frantisek Kriegel,[3] the leaders of the Prague Spring signed in Moscow the invitation to the Soviet troops to invade their country *ex post factum*. Then Dubcek and his followers agreed to serve as Soviet puppet rulers until they were replaced. Reformed communism

3. Frantisek Kriegel fought the Japanese in China, suffered from the Stalinist anti-Semitic purges in the 1950s and returned to the party in the 1960s when he helped establish the Cuban public health system. His courageous refusal to sign the Moscow dictate made him a dissident. See Václav Havel, "Thinking about Frantisek K." tr. by A. G. Brain, in Vaclav Havel, *Open Letters: Selected Writings 1965-1990* (New York: Vintage, 1992), pp. 363-372. The Czechoslovak leadership did not resist the occupation violently or non-violently: they traded their souls for their bodies. Dubcek had absolutely nothing to do with Charter 77. He neither influenced its signatories, nor signed Charter 77. Kriegel *did*.

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failed for lack of character: nobody, including its leaders, was ready to sacrifice or fight for it. Unlike Marxism-Leninism, humanist Marxism never had the opportunity to self-destruct. In retrospect, the problem of humanist Marxism is to differentiate itself from run-of-the-mill liberalism. Here Kosík is not very helpful. For him, socialism is composed of liberating "dialectics, revolutionary qualities, criticism, and humanism"(59). What does that mean? He talks about the socialization of the means of production and of an alliance of workers and intellectuals. From today's vantage point, however, a thriving economy does not seem to be able to run without private property and innovative management. Furthermore, an economy cannot avoid bureaucratization if the means of production are controlled by an apparat.

For all his vows against ideology and its meaningless jargon, in his November 1968 speech to the Central Committee of the Czech Communist Party (after the Soviet invasion) Kosík repeated the same old nonsense about working class, intelligentsia, agricultural workers and youth alliance. He failed to realize how the world had changed. He criticized Vaclav Havel's 1969 *Tvar* article on the Czech fate, which saw February 1969 as an open future and August 1968 as a closed past. Kosík claims that Havel overlooked that 1968 witnessed the "transformation of the working class, its reconstitution from the object of bureaucratic manipulation to the genuine subject of political events" (114). The working class would not be manipulated or become politically passive any more. "The past of 1968 is . . . living past until the fundamental social and political forces of socialist regeneration voluntarily abandon the scene or are ostracized from it." For Havel, 1968 was an attempt to normalize Czechoslovakia according to European standards, establish freedom of speech and freedom from the secret police. For Kosík, it was: "popular activity, revolutionary maturity, and initiative — in which the direct producers become the subjects of political events and the actual implementers of collective ownership and conduct themselves with practical steps toward a genuine liberation of man. . . . The society that was born of the Prague spring did not need or wish to be just 'a normal and healthy social organism,' but rather an authentic socialist society negating both capitalism and Stalinism" (115). Havel was right. Kosík constructed a political never-never land There was no politically active "working class" in 1968. The intelligentsia and the youth were liberal. The agricultural workers had never been political. Most significantly, petit-bourgeois Czechs had no class-consciousness. In 1969, Kosík called for a "return to Marx" as a critical thinker rather than the class ideologist of state-appointed Marxist ideologues. Culture should play a liberating role. He expected the "mature" working class and not just the intelligentsia to fight against censorship because it was in their common interest. At that point, Kosík became an anachronism.

In one of the last issues of *Tvar*,[4] Mandler criticized Kosík's failure to

4. Emanuel Mandler, "Realismus a redikalismus (dejiny, politicky program a prace II)," in *Tvar* No. 1 (1969), reprinted in Michael Spirit, ed., *Tvar: vybor z casopisu* (Prague: Torst, 1995), pp. 339-346.

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provide any self-criticism concerning his involvement with communism (Kosík still does not count the 1948 communist revolution as a tragedy similar to 1938 and 1968), which led him to justify ends by means.Inconsistently, however, Kosík condemned the manipulation of the masses as a means to a political end. Mandler disagreed with Kosík's claim that manipulation is a defining feature of modernity because it existed wherever there was politics. Not only is television not necessary for political manipulation, but politics without manipulation is utopian. In all elections there is some manipulation. The question is the degree and character of manipulation. In Mandler's opinion, Kosík regarded a necessary evil as avoidable but sided with the real avoidable evil: alliance with the devil (communism).

Kosík belongs to the radical branch of Czech politics which constructs history upside down. He uses grand rhetoric and overestimates the significance of the Czechs: if Czechs forget how small they are, they become dreamers instead of heroes. Political existence is just survival in a nasty environment. The Germans would have saved everyone (including themselves) a great deal of trouble had they just got along in the 1930s instead of attempting to fulfil a grand mission. Mandler thought that Kosík's radicalism contributed to the Czechs' inner weakness. Since it seeks to avoid the unavoidable, answer unanswerable or irrelevant questions, but does not see reality. Czechs should not attempt to "cheat the devil."

In 1969, Kosík participated in the debate about the origins of Czech weakness. Though he does not mention Patocka, he seems to debate the positions of his old teacher. Patocka held that the Czechs' weakness is a product of their low social origins — the fact that the Czech nation was created in 1781 with the liberation of the serfs. The character of liberated slaves gave the Czech national movement a petty character: small people fighting for their language rather than for a grand moral vision. This petty background prevented the Czechs from behaving honorably in 1938, 1948 and 1968. In Patocka's opinion, the Czechs' social origins explain the Hegelian master-slave dialectics of their relations with Germans.[5] Kosík thought the problem with the Czech national character is political naiveté and trust, which he traced back to the 19th century trust in the Habsburgs to create freedom and democracy, expecting a reactionary force to be progressive. The other mistake is the belief that, to the extent they are located between Russia and Germany, the Czechs must have powerful allies. "The founders bestowed on Czech politics a justifiable basis, while at the same time they burdened it for an entire decade with an ideological illusion that is unable to differentiate true allies from false. Ideological illusion is the reason Czech politics is losing its battle with

5. Jan Patocka, *Was sind die Tschechen: Kleiner Tatsachenbericht und Erklärungsversuch/ Co isou cesi: Maly prehled fakt a pokus o vysvetleni*, Ivan Chvatik and Pavel Kouba, eds. (Prague: Panorama, 1992). The Czech translation was prepared by Vladimir Jochmann. There is a French translation: "Qu'est-ce que les Tcheques?" in *L'idée de l'Europe en Bohême*, tr. by Erica Abrams (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1991), pp. 13-113, but no English translation. Cf. Aviezer Tucker, "Shipwrecked: Patocka's Philosophy of Czech History," in *History and Theory*, Vol. 35 (1996), pp. 196-216.

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time. Instead of foreseeing situations, discerning in time the intentions of its opponents and organizing forces for its own game, it lets events take it by surprise and it falls into a trap. Thus reason is always introduced to politics *post factum* just when events are over" (110).[6]

Like Patocka, Kosík applies Hegel's master-slave dialectics to the Czech predicament. He criticizes Patocka's reduction of the Czech national character to their class origin: "Because the Czech nation has not had any nobles in modern times, it is assumed that nobility of spirit is foreign to it; since we have not had a tradition of leadership and command, we thus lack courage as well. As a people we are plebeians, condemned forever to be uninspiring and fawning" (149). Kosík claims that no class has a monopoly of reason, courage, or humanity. They all spring from self-respect and honesty: "Every catastrophe knocks thought off balance. As a consequence, a nation that in the space of a short thirty years has gone through two shocks is inclined to search its conscience and to look for someone to blame, but it also succumbs to new illusions and lies. Disappointment from defeats does not invite reflection on events, but rather condemns one to further superficiality and naivete" (149). Kosík did not think that the reason for the defeat was the history of the Czech national movement. He caricatured the position of his opponents as claiming that had the Czechs only become Germanized everything would have been fine. Kosík thought that Bolzano's and Patocka's vision of a binational Bohemia was impossible because the Germans and their language would have been dominant. Kosík assumes that a language expresses a metaphysics. But Czech metaphysicians have always been using German (or Greek) conceptual frameworks in Czech translation.

After the 1968 failures, Kosík[7] returned to Hasek's Svejk in order to understand the crisis. When Svejk joins the revolution, he is soon put on trial for

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6. For a similar view, see Ernest Gellner, "The Price of Velvet: On Thomas Masaryk and Vaclav Havel," in *Telos* 94 (Winter 1992-1993), pp. 183-192.

7. As Satterwhite notes in his introduction, although Kosík regained his teaching appointment at Prague's Charles University in 1990, he was retired against his will in 1992 and is now a marginal figure. This state of affairs, however, does not reflect some sinister anti-Kosík conspiracy. The best Czech philosophers and intellectuals are outside academia. In 1990 parliament decentralized universities before they were reformed. Consequently, academic *apparatchiki* maintained and strengthened their positions because they were able to elect deans that protect them. When I came to Prague in 1992, *Telos* suggested that I contact Kosík and interview him. We made an appointment in his apartment above the famous Prague restaurant "The Three Swans," a stone's throw away from Prague Castle. I prepared a list of questions with my friend Miloslav Bednar, dealing with whether Kosík regretted any aspect of his past (referring to his Communist background); what he had been working on for the past 20 years; and if he thought socialism, in any shape or form, had a future? He received us cordially and I presented him with a copy of *Telos*. He gave me an article (subsequently published in English as Karel Kosík, "The Third Munich," *Telos* 94 [Winter 1992-1993], pp. 145-154) and promised to write his answers in a few weeks. Despite subsequent inquiries, he never did. I suppose he had no answers.

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counterrevolutionary activity.[8] Svejk and Luxemburg are examples of true revolutionaries who believed in freedom for all, not just the bureaucracy — unlike Lenin and Trotsky, who sent soldiers to fight the Kronstadt sailors. Hasek recognized what Lukács missed in 1923, that the revolution has already gone through reification. Svejk is a good soldier in never crossing the boundaries of civil norms: he never shoots. Kosík's discussion of Svejk is excellent, but it embodies the tragedy of the Czechs, who have been better at making jokes than at fighting their oppressors. It took Patocka almost ten years to transform the national-historical self-search into a dissident movement in 1977.

Henri Declève's *Profils de Jan Patocka* anthology contains one of the most interesting discussions to come out of Eastern Europe concerning the meaning of dissidence because the participants are theorizing about their immediate experiences. It is relevant to situations when people find themselves in conflict with the powers that be and attempt to explain why they refuse to compromise their moral principles for the sake of personal safety and material gain. Dissidence neither began in Eastern Europe nor ended with the fall of the Soviet Empire. The practice of dissidence preceded its theoretical elaboration. In the Czech context, to belong to Charter 77 meant the acceptance of the almost irrevocable status of a dissident, defiant of the state, the party, and the *apparat* that controlled all aspects of life. The personal implications of signing the Charter could be predicted, but the full brunt of the state's vindictiveness — banishment from working in one's profession, of one's children from higher education, constant harassment — were felt only later. Some of the dissidents did not choose their social status. They implicated themselves in civic and democratic initiatives during the brief period of liberalization that culminated in the Prague Spring. Soon after the Soviet invasion and the ensuing "normalization," they lost their jobs; those who were Party members were expelled and found themselves in the social wilderness.

In view of Patocka's silence under Stalinism during the 1950s and 1960s, Ernest Gellner thought the main reason for Patocka's dissidence was the arrest of his son by the Prague police for scribbling the graffiti "I Like Ike." As a result, Jan Patocka Jr. was banned from higher education and decent employment. After 1968 Patocka's philosophy shifted from reflection to action and culminated in Charter 77 (written during the 1976 Christmas vacation). He sought a "life shaking" experience of self-sacrifice to break the rule of everydayness and deliver himself and a community of shattered dissidents to authenticity and transcendence.

Patocka died in March 1977, soon after he founded Charter 77. After his death, discussions concerning dissidence were continued largely by his students. Petr Rezek's *Filosofie a politika kú e* (*The Philosophy and Politics of Kitsch*) is a collection of articles published in *samizdat* in the late 1980s. One of Patocka's

8. In the novel *Buqulma,* Svejk is personified by Comrade Gasek, whose revolution is liberty and humor while Yerohymov personifies the opposite principle of obsession with force. They both lose to Agapov's ruthless cruelty.

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closest students, Rezek defends dissidence as searching for truth while living in conflict. He criticizes his fellow dissidents in general and Václav Havel in particular for advocating political and philosophical *kitsch*. Patocka and Havel characterized dissidence as *life in truth*. There is a long Czech tradition from Jan Hus to Immanuel Rádl that sees *truth* as a way of life directed by moral principles. It is symbolized by Masaryk's choice of the Hussite battle cry: "Prava vit zi!" (Truth Prevails!) as the motto of Czechoslovak presidents. In Rezek's opinion, life in truth has emotional force that leads to *kitschy* interpretations.

Following his teacher, Husserl, Patocka saw life as realization of possibilities. For Patocka, truth has a Heideggerian meaning: the uncovering of things, letting them appear, *a-letheia*. There are two possible interpretations to this. Rezek contrasts Patocka's formulations of life in truth in his *Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History* and in the postscript to the 1975 French translation of his dissertation on the natural world, written under Husserl's supervision in 1934.[9] In the former (as well as *Plato and Europe*) life in truth is historical and political. Patocka follows Arendt in locating the birth of life in truth, politics, and history: in the Greek *polis*. The public sphere creates a social space where truth can appear. Here life in truth is a turning away from the phenomena to what makes them possible, Being, politics and philosophy have a common origin. Political life directs man toward life as a whole. In the postscript, however, life in truth is life in limit situations, on the frontier (in Jasper's sense) where politics is unnecessary. The dissident who lives in truth does not return to the world, to the phenomena, but remains on the border where truth dwells. Typical life in truth can be found in religious acts, artistic activity and thought. In this sense, life in truth is not historical mass action.

Rezek endorses this latter interpretation, whereas Havel interprets life in truth as authenticity, responsibility, and moral action in-the-world. Rezek thinks that Havel's position is inconsistent with Patocka's. But *Plato and Europe* makes it abundantly clear that ethics is one aspect of life in truth. In Rezek's opinion, Havel's politics of authenticity, critique of the regime, life in harmony with the human *telos*, and avoidance of life in a lie and hypocrisy[10] may be a sufficient criteria for deciding who is a dissident but not for the *meaning* of dissidence. Havel uses "life in truth" almost always in a social context. According to him, in post-totalitarian systems each person is classified according to whether he cooperates with the system: whether he lives in a lie or in truth. Rezek criticizes Havel for denying a person without social connection the possibility of life in truth.

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9. Jan Patocka, *Kaci ské eseje o filosofii d jin* (Prague: Academia, 1990). See my review in *History and Theory*, Vol. 31 (1992), pp. 355-363. See also Jan Patocka, *Le Monde Natural comme Probleme Philosophique*, tr. by Jaromir Danek and Henri Declève (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975).

10. Vaclav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless," (1978) in *Open Letters: Selected Writings 1965-1990*, tr. by Paul Wilson (New York: Vintage, 1992), pp. 125-214.

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Rezek endorses the search for truth on the frontier, in borderline situations. The political element of dissident existence is a by-product of the search for truth in a totalitarian environment. Dissident politics is readiness to live in conflict with power. The decision to live in conflict does not have to be there at the beginning, but is necessarily presupposed by the course of dissident life. Dissidents live in conflict and in truth also in political circumstances which do not necessitate conflict with power (in democracies), where the result is conflict between the dissidents who are *ready* to live in conflict and conforming people who are not ready to take risks. In Rezek's view, it is impossible to live in a border situation and at the same time be engaged in moral and political life. On the border, the philosopher, the artist and the religious person who experience revelation are beyond the world: they renounce it.

The interpretations of Patocka in Declève's anthology are far closer to Patocka's texts than to Rezek's position. In fact, some of the essays are so close, one wonders why it was necessary to publish them, since Patocka's works are readily available in French translation. At any rate, Declève's anthology includes moving letters of Patocka to Declève from the 1970s, when Patocka decried his political isolation, bemoaned the lack of recent philosophical works and the political upheavals that forced him to concentrate on the history of philosophy. The academic articles by West European philosophers are less interesting and do not address the problem of dissidence. The two Czech contributions, by Radim Palous and Ladislav Hejdanek, are more interesting. Palous wanders about the dualism of the "shaken" dissident philosopher, at once a participant and spectator of life. In his opinion, the person as measure of all things can never be just an observer; he must also be a protagonist in the discovery of the *logos*. Though Palous regards the "sophist" everyday concerns of the *polis* inferior to philosophy, he suggests that Socrates' way of life is the model for combining participation with observation. One of the attractive things about Patocka is that he is one of the few continental philosophers of note whose politics are admirable. His work suggests that Husserlian phenomenology may be reformed to provide a basis for a moral life, political action, and dissident practice.

Aviezer Tucker

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From Fascism to the Managerial State

Franklin Hugh Adler, *Italian Industrialists from Liberalism to Fascism: The Political Development of the Italian Bourgeoisie, 1906-1934* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 458pp.

In this voluminous work of almost 500 pages, Adler explains more than he takes credit for. Setting out to show the collective survival tactics of Italian industrialists from the century's beginning up to Mussolini's personal consolidation of power, Adler analyzes Italy's largest union of industrial owners, the Confederazione Generale dell'Industria Italiana. In particular he follows the career of Gino Olivetti, a wealthy North Italian of Sephardic descent who devised for Italian industrialists the intersectoral *sindicato padronale* by copying the workers' movement. Olivetti designed a confederation for industrial owners which cut across scales and types of production while stressing the solidarity of all members of the "*borghesia del lavoro*." First developing this model for the Industrial League of Turin in 1906 and then extending it regionally across Piedmont in 1908, by 1910 Olivetti succeeded in building a truly national confederation of the "productive bourgeoisie," which went on to lock in combat with the Italian labor movement. Before WWI, Olivetti, taking another leaf from the socialist international, arranged for a gathering of the productive bourgeoisie from across the world. Needless to say, he and his coworkers shared the classical liberal hope that bourgeois rule and bourgeois economic organization would lead to greater international harmony.

Adler underlines the fact that Olivetti and other prominent members of what by 1919 had become Confindustria were disinclined to both wars and militant ideologies. Olivetti had supported Italy's participation in the war only after it was an accomplished fact, and though the Confederation generally backed the Blocco Nazionale, it did so not as hard-core nationalists but because of the Bloc's opposition to the economic demands of socialists and labor union activists. During the post-WWI strikes crippling production in the Po Valley and throughout northern industrial centers, Olivetti and Confindustria did look favorably, at times, to the fascist *squadristi*, as a countervailing force to the anarchists and pro-socialist Catholic *popolari*. But, as Adler makes clear, even at the time of Mussolini's March on Rome, Confindustria was hoping that Giovanni Giolitti, Luigi Facta or some other leader of the Blocco Nazionale would create a durable parliamentary coalition. At the time of Mussolini's appointment as prime minister, moreover, Olivetti and his associates were fashioning trade agreements between the Soviets and Italian industrialists. Despite their dislike for Italian socialist revolutionaries, they were happy to entertain Soviet trade delegations and to send Italian manu-

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factured goods to the Soviet Union.

According to Adler, the same kind of nonideological pragmatism characterized Confindustria's dealings with the triumphant fascist regime. Following Renzo de Felice's account of the evolving fascist government, Adler points out that until the 1920s Mussolini gave repeated assurances that he would protect property and reduce the general tax burden. As de Felice demonstrates, by 1925 fascist Italy was moving in a radical direction. The restiveness of the *squadristi* and of fascist labor unions, together with the revolutionary fervor of fascist militants (*arditi*) on the Grand Council, such as Giuseppe Bottai and Massimo Rocca, helped push the regime away from its liberal phase. In the face of this challenge, Olivetti and Confindustria rushed to give the impression of being an industrial corporation within a corporate state. They temporized over Grand Council demands that fascist labor unions negotiate collectively for Italian workers. Confindustria's associates in the Ministry of Corporations even concocted treatises that defined their own "nonintegral corporatism." They toned down the social radicalism inherent in fascist corporatist ideology and persuaded Mussolini to accept their reformulations. Olivetti himself held formal government positions under the regime until the mid-1930s and used them to counteract social revolutionaries, like the fire-eating Bottai; and the demand raised by the *arditi* for national ownership of the means of production. Adler presents these representatives of Italian industry as a moderating force in the fascist regime, as reluctant collaborators in a social experiment they wished was not taking place.

In this painstaking presentation of the moderating industrial bourgeoisie, Adler provides a historical picture quite different from the one drawn by Denis Mack-Smith and Gaetano Salvemini. Italian industrialists and their maneuvering leadership are shown not as the natural or cynical bedfellows of fascist counterrevolutionaries but as decent bourgeois trying to make the best of a bad hand. The fascist regime is seen through de Felice's lenses as a developing government that went from a liberal through a corporatist to a personal dictatorship phase. By the early 1930s, Mussolini decided to do away with warring factions by concentrating power in himself. According to de Felice and Adler, instead of a single fascist government, there were several discrete fascist administrations shaped by interparty conflict and by Mussolini's attempt to build a national consensus. By the late 1930s, this process of development had given way to a dictatorship modeled on Hitlerian Germany. This, in turn, led to anti-Semitic legislation that forced Olivetti into exile and to a political climate which no longer allowed Confindustria to function as an independent force.

Nonetheless, as Adler explains, it was the post-WWII Italian Republic which fundamentally transformed the Italian economy and turned Confindustria into a shadow of what it had been. An Italian government in the hands of nonliberal parties, including clericalists and socialists, the postwar order had little in common with the liberal mentality of an earlier time. The coming into being of an Italian

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managerial state, the *stato assistenziale*, increased the government's incentive to tax heavily and to take over productive forces. Over 50% of Italian industry was eventually nationalized, while at least that percentage of incomes would come directly from the state. Moreover, the publications and pronouncements of Confindustria, notes Adler, ceased to exalt private ownership and constitutionally limited government. Rather, they celebrated a form of cooperation between workers and corporate executives exemplified by an American-type welfare state.

Adler observes that in postwar Italy the liberal bourgeoisie has lost cultural significance and political influence. But one explanation for this phenomenon, that the class to which liberal ideas was attached was weaker in Italy than in Western Europe or the US, is not entirely convincing. Indeed, it is hard to find any Western country in which bourgeois culture flourished as long as it did in Italy. Already by the high Middle Ages, there emerged in Italian city states a distinctly bourgeois and urban culture, one that became intertwined with the production of Renaissance literature, pictorial art, historiography, and architecture. And despite the succeeding centuries of foreign occupation and clericalist power, Italy continued to have a vigorous urban life and an educated commercial class. Though in the 19th century industrialization reached Italy later than England, the US, Belgium, or France and affected significantly only certain regions, Italian bourgeois culture was at least as deeply entrenched as it was elsewhere. In the 19th century, that culture became infused with liberal and nationalist ideas, as Italian intellectual life incorporated North European (and particularly German) philosophical currents.

It should also be remarked that Italians did not absorb and adapt ideas as denizens of a cultural backwater. Their bourgeoisie produced world-class sociologists, economists, historians, and philosophers and, as in the case of Olivetti's worldwide confederation of industrial producers, the vision of an international bourgeois order as a counterpoint to the socialist movement. What befell the Italian liberal bourgeoisie was a secular development now as widespread in the US as across the Atlantic. State managers have taken over liberal democracies, now defined as public administrations, while the industrial economy is dominated by corporate managers and government overseers. This managerial revolution has engulfed all Western regimes and economies, and has turned the liberal bourgeoisie (or what remains of it) into a social fossil.

Adler begins his narrative, appropriately, not with Mussolini's ascent to power but at the turn of the century. A working class movement, a left-liberal parliamentary government making opportunistic concessions to democratic forces, the movement toward confederating industrial producers (often accompanied by cartellization), and the appeal of imperialism as a source of national unity are the tendencies Adler shows at work in pre-WWII Italy. But they could also be found operative elsewhere in the Western world at the same time — an observation Adler does not make in part because of his predetermined national focus. From a

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comparative perspective, the fascist era, until Mussolini's disastrous turn in the 1930s, represented a crisis of the old order similar in kind to what was going on in other Western countries. A new national welfare state (corresponding to inter-war social democracy) took form in Italy under the banner of "national revolution" and forced the liberal bourgeoisie, whose agencies and maneuvering Adler skillfully describes, to make timely adaptations. But the fascist state was an Italian variation on the democratic managerial regime which succeeded liberal or quasi-liberal states elsewhere. De Felice demonstrates this point in detail, which led to his being discredited in Italian Left-liberal circles. He demonstrated, to the embarrassment of his colleagues, that Italian fascists were engaged in building a modern administrative state — one based on a mixed economy and social services. At times, Italian fascists were also open to liberal bourgeois allies, but this was an alliance of convenience, which occurred despite fascist ideological opposition, especially from fascist union leaders.

The liberal bourgeoisie, as presented by Adler, was buying time against more radical political change, which came first in the brutal last phase of fascist rule and, even more dramatically, under the postwar Italian Republic. State, society and the economy underwent profound transformation throughout the Western world in the first half of the century, and this secular trend resulted in the fascist experiment as well as in the New Deal and in Scandinavian welfare states. Adler reveals the Italian path to late modernity, but it is important not to lose sight of the common direction in which Western industrial states have moved in this century.

Both Adler and de Felice depict the liberal bourgeoisie as *fiancheggiatori* — hangers-on during the fascist years, hoping to moderate the zeal of engaged national revolutionaries. De Felice describes how, in the Spring of 1925, these *fiancheggiatori* became alarmed as fascist union leaders whipped up strikes across Northern Italy, almost as a replication of what the anarchists had done five years earlier. In the end, Mussolini stepped in to restrain his *arditi* while requiring industrialists to make major wage concessions. But both state and society in Italy would be permanently affected by the role of the government as a spokesman for the working class and by the growing dependence of the upper bourgeoisie on the state as a fair-weather protector. This remained the case in postwar Italy as elsewhere.

These particular events may warrant the raising of speculative questions. What would have happened if Mussolini had decided to nationalize outright the heavy industries targeted by the 1925 strikers? Or if FDR had proceeded to regulate heavily American commerce and industry during the second and more intensive New Deal in 1937? The answer is that nothing much would have been different, at least not in the end. These societies would have simply moved faster toward the postbourgeois, managerial society of today. This movement would have occurred with less dragging action exerted by vestigial bourgeois forces and by 19th century constitutional notions. But the political and social destination would have been the same. This may suggest what is wrong with making too much of

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certain "exceptions" in surveys of recent history: e.g., the liberal backwardness of modern Italy, the democratic constitutional regime of the 20th century US, or reactionary Catholic Spanish character. The shared tendencies and directions of modern Western political societies may seem by now to be overshadowing those *Sonderwege*, *sentieri particolari*, and other national exceptions so striking to post-WWII historians. In this sense, Frank Adler's meticulous and sweeping study of the Italian industrial bourgeoisie before, during and after the fascist epoch describes part of a downfall that extends beyond the fate of Confindustria.

Paul Gottfried

L'homme et la société

Revue internationale
de recherches et de synthèses en sciences sociales

N° 120 1996/2

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